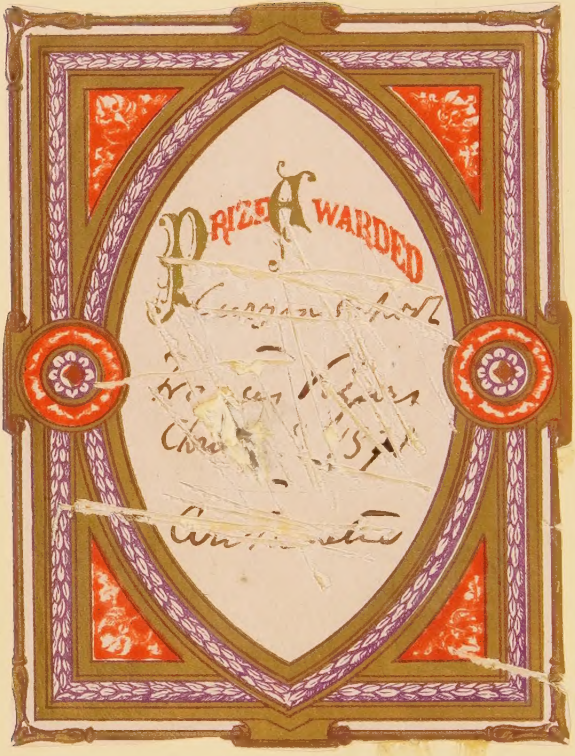
TALES OF FILIAL
LOVE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"A cold chill struck to his heart, a mist crept over his eyes, the paper fell from his trembling hands."—*P.* 182.

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TALES

OF

FILIAL LOVE.

BY

THEODORE H. BARRAU.

Eight Full-Page Illustrations.

EDINBURGH:
GALL & INGLIS, 6 GEORGE STREET.

PREFACE.

"The blessedness of love," says the poet Beaumont, "is pure affection;" and what affection can be so thoroughly pure and disinterested as that of a child for its parent? Filial love has its first manifestation in the mother's arms, and dies not when we die, but is transmitted from generation to generation—never growing old nor weary, but always remaining dear and tender, youthful and true. Other feelings may wax dull and cold: friends may prove false, and brethren unkind: the bands that unite us to home and kindred may be rudely torn asunder, and the exigencies of travel and the cares of the world may make us forgetful of our early aspirations—but our child-love for mother and father never deserts us:

> "It grows a part of us, lives in our blood,
> And every beating pulse proclaims its force."

It has been the aim of the Author of these Tales of Filial Love to exhibit this holy passion in a variety of aspects; while, at the same time, he has

endeavoured to enlist the attention of his readers, by presenting the details of each narrative in such a manner as it seemed to him would prove alike attractive to youthful fancy and mature experience. If he has succeeded in this aim, he doubts not that his little book will find acceptance by a large and appreciative circle: not the least among its claims to recognition being due to the clever artist with whom he has been associated in his pleasant labours.

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The Cascade in the Woods.

The Castle of Rosenthal.—*P.* 9.

The Cascade in the Woods.

CHAPTER I.

In one of the most distant provinces of Germany lies embosomed, in the centre of a lovely valley, the large and flourishing village of Rosenthal; on an adjacent hill rises a Gothic castle, which bears the same name. This castle, this village, and some neighbouring hamlets, formed a rich barony, the proprietor of which had still preserved some of the seigneurial rights which were formerly in full vigour all over Germany. On the neighbouring heights stretched the immense woods which formed part of the domain.

At the period at which this story opens, that is to say, in the early part of the present century, this domain belonged to an old nobleman, who was an invalid, and childless. He had summoned to him a distant relation, still young, Madame de Kilberg,

a widow, with one son, about thirteen, named Maurice. This woman, proud and poor, flattered herself that the Baron would bequeath his domain to Maurice. We shall shortly see if her hopes were well founded.

Maurice was a wicked boy, very badly brought up by his mother, still more wicked of himself. He seldom thought of anything but doing mischief. He would learn nothing, saying, that a young gentleman like he was, destined to be one day a great and powerful lord, had no necessity to know anything, except how to amuse himself. And even that he did not know how to do, for he could not manage to amuse himself alone, and he was too proud to play with the children of the village. At times, therefore, he got dreadfully weary of himself, and his own company.

Fortunately for him, a lad, better dressed, and apparently a little richer than the children of the neighbouring farmers, came to settle at Rosenthal with his mother, and the proud Maurice thought, tired as he was of his solitary state, that he might, without compromising himself too much, condescend so far as to play with him sometimes.

The name of this child was Armand, and his mother's was Madame Ernest. Who was he? Who was she? No one knew. No one in the place had ever heard of this lady, and when she suddenly made

her appearance in the village of Rosenthal she did not say where she came from.

She was attracted to this valley, at that time, by there being for sale in the village a rather pretty house, surrounded by a garden. It was a very modest dwelling, but distinguished from the other houses in the village by its extreme neatness and order, and a certain degree of elegance in its design. Madame Ernest bought this house, and installed herself in it with her son Armand and an old servant, who appeared to be extremely attached to her.

Armand was an excellent child, full of amiable qualities. His mother had brought him up with the greatest care: as she was herself very accomplished, she had undertaken the charge of his education. He therefore neither went to school, nor kept company with the children in the village. This was not, like Maurice, from pride, for on occasion he behaved most kindly to them, and rendered them all the little services that were in his power. But his mother did not wish him to become too intimate, fearing that some of them might set him bad examples, or teach him bad words, and she therefore desired that her son should have no other society than hers.

She herself had no other companion but him. All her happiness was centred in her son. Ever sad, caused by the remembrance of a great grief, she

rarely smiled, except when she saw her child gaily amusing himself in the sports suitable to his age. Often, as she looked at him, she could not refrain from shedding tears. He would inquire the cause of her grief, but she made him no answer. He would then throw his arms round her neck, and kiss away her tears, and her spirits would revive.

Armand was so docile, so obedient to his mother, so loving, so eager to please her! When a mother is blessed with such a child, how can she help forgetting all her cares and crosses?

Every one in the village loved and esteemed Madame Ernest. They respected her melancholy; they refrained from intruding on her solitude; and as she did all the good that her slender resources permitted, she was never spoken of but with sympathy and interest.

How greatly would Madame Ernest, who kept her son so carefully away from the village children, have liked to prohibit the society of Maurice. But that was not possible. Maurice had caught sight of Armand, and determined to make a companion of him; not out of good-nature, or the desire of having a friend—a wish so natural to well-regulated minds—but to escape having to play alone. He hoped, moreover, that this boy, whose position seemed so inferior to his own, would easily allow himself to be ruled, and he flattered himself that he should be

able to lord and tyrannize over him to his heart's content.

One Sunday, therefore, on coming out of church, he went up to Armand, who was then, like himself, about thirteen, and requested him to pay a visit to the castle. Seeing that Armand dared not accept the invitation without his mother's permission, and that Madame Ernest did not appear disposed to give this permission, he ran up to Madame de Kilberg, who had not yet entered her carriage (for this woman was so vain, that even to the church, which was not a hundred steps from the castle, she would not have gone on foot for the world), and begged her to speak for him to Armand's mother. Madame de Kilberg, who could refuse nothing to her son, consented, though with repugnance, to satisfy him. She in consequence approached Madame Ernest, and believed she conferred an immense honour by asking her—ungraciously enough—to allow Armand to come to the castle. She had even intended to say:

"You will be proud, I suppose, for your son to have the honour of coming to play with mine."

But insolent and overbearing as she was, she was disconcerted by the noble and dignified bearing of Madame Ernest, and expressing herself—though with regret—with more politeness, she said drily:

"I shall be obliged to you, madame" (this word

madame seemed to blister her tongue, she would rather have said *good woman*), "if you will permit your little boy to come and spend an hour or two at the castle, with Mr. Maurice de Kilberg, my son, the next of kin and heir of the Baron de Rosenthal."

Madame Ernest had a great mind to say no; for, to judge of the son by the mother, such an acquaintance was hardly to be desired: but she read in Armand's eyes such a longing to accept the companionship offered to him, that she had not the heart to refuse him this pleasure. Besides, she feared to offend Madame de Kilberg, and to make an enemy of her by refusing. This lady's animosity, she easily understood, might be productive of unpleasant consequences to her.

Armand was therefore allowed to accompany Maurice to the castle, whither he often went afterwards, and where his gentle and obliging disposition gained him the good-will of everybody. They would have become friends if Maurice had had a good heart. But as it was, they could be no more than companions to each other, and this companionship was disturbed by frequent storms. Maurice always wanted to be master; Armand, in spite of the mildness of his disposition, would not submit to be governed and ordered about, and he was quite right.

From this cause arose frequent quarrels and frequent ruptures. But on these occasions it was always Maurice who went in search of his comrade, and who, notwithstanding his pride, made the first advances; for, as we have said, he was wretchedly ignorant, not knowing even how to amuse himself alone. But far from feeling grateful for the good-natured readiness with which Armand so often forgot his ill-usage, he disliked him for not allowing himself to be tyrannized over, and cherished against him, at the bottom of his heart, a feeling of envy and ill-will.

Such was the nature of the connection between these two boys.

As for the two mothers, they never met. Madame de Kilberg was by far too haughty to pay a visit to one whom she looked on as a mere common person; while, on the other hand, Madame Ernest was too much a prey to melancholy, and had besides too much elevation and pride of character to pay court to the lady of the castle.

II.

In the meantime there were going to be great rejoicings at the castle, on the occasion of the Baron's birthday. A numerous and brilliant com-

pany had been invited. There were to be sports and amusements of all sorts; a concert, then a banquet, followed by a ball. Armand was not invited to this festival. There were other children belonging to all the nobility of the neighbourhood, and Armand, so well brought up, so amiable, and already so well informed—Armand, whom Maurice could not do without when he was alone, was not judged worthy to be admitted into their company. Maurice on that day had other companions, and thought no more of Armand than if he had never existed.

Armand, as he was sensible, could not help feeling hurt at this mark of indifference. It was not that he ever believed much in Maurice's attachment, but he would have liked—as was very natural—to enjoy the pleasures of this festival, and be a witness of its splendour. The concert especially, he would have been enchanted to listen to, and was particularly disappointed at being deprived of this treat. But for all this he was careful not to betray his mortification, or speak of it before his mother—so considerate was he of her feelings, so anxious to avoid giving her the slightest uneasiness.

But Madame Ernest divined what was passing in her son's heart.

To divert his mind, she kept him employed nearly the whole of that day in very varied studies; for she knew that variety in labour prevents fatigue; she

diversified his studies by amusing reading. Reading, as every one knows, is a great preventive to weariness; so that, after all, this day, which promised to be long and tedious to Armand, turned out delightful, and flew rapidly by, like a dream.

"Oh, mamma," said he, towards the evening, "how happy I have been to-day; and I do not at all regret not having gone to the castle."

Madame Ernest, delighted with his words, pressed her amiable child to her heart.

"Dear boy," said she, "we will finish this happy day by a delightful walk. We will go as far as the pretty stream called the Cascade in the Wood, that you are so fond of."

Armand jumped for joy at this proposition.

The idea of this walk was delightful to him; and besides, he was always so happy when his mother was pleased with him. He ran, leaped, gambolled by her side, stopping from time to time to gather flowers; and his mother, seeing him so gay, forgot for a time all her cares and sorrows.

They arrived at the cascade, a spot which Armand preferred to all others, and whither his mother often took him, and loved to converse with him.

It was indeed a charming and picturesque spot, on the confines of the forest. The water, gushing from the midst of the rocks, fell into a natural basin, where it formed a transparent sheet, clear as crystal, at the

bottom of which the silvery sand and shining pebbles were distinctly visible, and escaping thence with a soft murmur, gave birth to a limpid stream, which meandered through the village.

Seated near the cascade, by the side of his mother, Armand admiringly contemplated the pure crystal stream.

"Oh, mamma," said he, "how beautiful and clear this water is!"

"Yes," said his mother. "Well, tell me now of what it seems to you to be the image."

Armand reflected for a few moments, and then replied:

"This water, so clear and limpid, seems to me to be the image of a pure soul, that no evil thoughts have ever sullied, and no bad passion ever troubled."

"Yes, my son; but stay—look."

As she spoke, a toad leaped from the turf into the water, and disturbed it. Armand made a gesture of disgust.

"Well, my child, what say you now?"

Without the slightest hesitation, Armand replied

"Oh, mamma, that odious creature, who, by throwing itself into the water, has sullied and disturbed it, is like a bad thought, which may in a moment infest the purest soul, and corrupt it."

"But see, the water has already become clear

again. Think you that the soul once stained by vice can thus easily regain its purity?"

"Oh, no, mamma; I do not believe it. It would take a long time to cure it, and it is even possible that it might never be cured."

"What conclusion do you draw from that, dear boy?"

"That a child should shun all bad thoughts, because his soul, like that water, would soon lose its purity, and perhaps not so quickly recover it."

Armand, it will be seen, had good sense, and an intelligent mind.

He added:

"But, mamma, since wicked thoughts are always so near at hand, tell me how a child like me, still so ignorant, may distinguish the bad from the good."

"Oh, my child, nothing is easier. It is sufficient to hearken to the voice of God, and God always speaks clearly to the conscience. Be pious, sincere, faithful to all your duties; and if a bad thought arises within you, you will recognise it immediately, and it will be easy to banish it.

"Thus, my son, will you alone be happy; for true happiness consists only in peace of conscience, and in the practice of virtue."

At these words Armand looked sorrowfully and doubtingly upon his mother. The sun was by that time setting behind the hills, and purpling the skies

with its expiring glories; a bright ray, darting through the foliage, fell full upon the boy's face, and illuminated his countenance, full of anxious inquiry?"

"What is the matter, my love?" exclaimed Madame Ernest. "You look as if some thought had arisen in your mind; of what are you thinking which you dared not express?"

"Yes," said Armand, with a visible effort: "of course, I believe what you have just said, and yet I cannot understand it. If peace of conscience and the practice of virtue suffice to render us happy, how comes it that you, who are goodness and virtue itself, are so often in tears?"

Madame Ernest for a moment was thoughtful and silent. She then replied:

"Heaven, who sends us trials, does not forbid us to mourn for them; but He sends us also consolations which render us happy in the midst of our troubles. To me, one of these consolations is to see you so good and diligent. Therefore, in spite of all my misfortunes, I am happy. These misfortunes, which are also yours, I will reveal to you shortly, for you become more and more worthy of having a secret confided to you. But I feel fatigued; let us drop the subject for the present. We will now talk about gayer things, and return home, for it is nearly night."

As they returned, they had to pass the castle, all the windows of which were brilliantly illuminated.

"Oh, mother," exclaimed Armand, "how splendid! Oh, what a magnificent sight it must be inside! How Maurice must be enjoying himself!"

He added, with a sigh:

"I am not jealous of the pleasures which Maurice enjoys; I do not envy him his fine clothes, his toys of all sorts; his friendship is all I value. But really, mamma, I do not think he cares much about me."

As he spoke, one of the windows of the castle opened, and the sounds of harmonious music reached their ears.

"Oh," again exclaimed Armand, "how they are enjoying themselves! how delightful it must be! But," he added, recollecting himself, "I have passed such a happy day, I do not at all regret not having been invited."

"You are very right, dear boy," said his mother. "Let us learn to be happy in our own humble condition. Let us not go out of our sphere; let us content ourselves with the simple pleasures that are within our reach: it is the only way of preserving our dignity, and at the same time, insuring our happiness."

At this moment other windows were opened, and the music of a lively dance floated on the air.

Armand could not help again exclaiming, but this time without regret, and even gaily:

"How Maurice must be enjoying himself! You speak of happiness, mamma; if any one is happy, it must be he."

"Armand! Armand!" replied his mother, "never trust to appearances. It is sometimes in the midst of our brightest joys that sorrow assails us; and our most brilliant pleasures are sometimes followed by the bitterest pains."

III.

Madame Ernest little thought that her words would be so soon verified or illustrated at the castle.

Very early the next morning, as she and Armand were quietly breakfasting, piercing cries resounded in front of their house; the door opened suddenly, and Maurice, breathless, distracted, his hair in disorder, and his eyes red with weeping, rushed into the room, uttering inarticulate sobs. The mother and son rose hastily, and ran towards him. Armand took him by the hand, and passing his arm round the neck of Maurice, inquired the cause of his agitation. At first Maurice was unable to reply, his voice was so choked with grief; but after a while, he threw himself upon a sofa, and said, in a broken voice:

"Pity me, Armand! pity me! I am the most unfortunate fellow in the world. I am ruined—we are all ruined! The Baron is dead!"

"Goodness! is it possible?" exclaimed both mother and son, in a breath.

Armand added:

"I pity you with all my heart. I am much grieved at the death of that worthy nobleman;" and as he spoke, tears fell from his eyes.

Maurice, who had by this time somewhat recovered himself, cried in a rage:

"Do not be sorry for him, Armand! do not care for him! He was a wicked, bad man! Ah, if you only knew how he has served us! I do not cry for him—not I; I curse him!"

He then broke forth anew into a fresh fit of passion: he stamped, he sobbed, he thumped his head; he actually bit the sofa-cushions in his fury, which seemed as if it would choke him.

Touched, surprised, and even alarmed, Madame Ernest lavished every possible care upon him, and addressed him, as did Armand, in the kindest and most consoling manner. When he had become a little calmer, she obtained from him, not without difficulty, an account of what had happened. In giving this account he interrupted himself frequently to utter groans or cries of rage.

This is what had occurred:

The evening before, some time after Madame Ernest and her son had passed in front of the splendidly illuminated windows of the castle, the Baron, in the middle of the ball, felt himself suddenly taken ill. He was subject to an infirmity which, it is said, is not very rare among the Germans, a fondness for wine. During supper, he drank largely of the finest wines, both red and white, and finished, by way of a foolish bravado, by calling for a gigantic silver goblet he sometimes used, into which he poured a whole bottle of champagne, and drank it off at a draught to the last drop, to the health of his guests.

The punishment of intemperance is usually sure and terrible. On this occasion it was also speedy. After this ridiculous exploit, the Baron, on rising from the table, staggered, and seemed seized with a giddiness in the head. Making a violent effort over himself, he gave the signal for the ball to recommence, but a few moments after, to the consternation of the spectators, he threw up his arms wildly, and fell backwards on the floor. He was carried in haste to his bed. A physician, who happened to be among the guests, bled him freely, and did all that skill could suggest or science prescribe in such a case; it was all of no avail; the Baron's death had been instantaneous.

The terror and consternation that succeeded to the joy of the festival may be readily imagined. The

greater number of the guests hastily entered their carriages, and took their departure. The notary, the burgomaster, and the most intimate friends of the deceased, remained.

They all endeavoured to console Madame de Kilberg, who was overwhelmed in tears.

"Alas!" she would say, "what an excellent friend, what a generous benefactor have I lost! How he loved me, and how I loved him! I would have given my life ten times over for him. He was so good, so worthy!"

"But," she added, "my grief, violent as it is, must not prevent my fulfilling my duty. I must not give way, for I have to watch over and protect the interests of my Maurice, who is, as every one knows, the Baron's heir, and of whom I am the guardian. I will, therefore, avail myself of the welcome presence of the burgomaster, the notary, and you all, our honourable neighbours and friends, to take possession of all the keys."

It was then that, in the midst of a profound silence, the notary, addressing himself to Madame de Kilberg, said:

"Do not be in so great haste, madame. It is not you who are to be put in possession of the keys, but the late Baron's man of business, Tourson. Maurice is not, as you believe, the Baron's heir, and you are now but a visitor here. To-morrow you shall have

proof of what I announce. In the meantime you, and all persons, listen to the contents of this paper, which I always have carried about me, in anticipation of an event such as this which has just happened."

Madame de Kilberg felt as if the earth had opened and swallowed her up.

The notary took from his pocket-book a note, which he proceeded to read aloud, and which was as follows.

"In the event of my death, I forbid Madame de Kilberg to be allowed to exercise any authority in the castle; and I desire my notary to take immediate possession of all the keys and my entire property."

This order was executed immediately, and the better to assure himself of the safety of everything, the notary installed himself at the castle for the night. The other guests immediately withdrew. Madame de Kilberg retired to her apartments with her son, and passed the whole of the night in fury and lamentations, not for the death of a relative who had been her benefactor, but for the downfall of her ambitious hopes.

Such were the facts related by Maurice. In the evening, this account was confirmed (who could have believed it?) by Madame de Kilberg in person. Yes, she actually condescended to visit Madame Ernest, and to come on foot (probably because the coachman at the castle would not put the horses to for her).

She who had hitherto treated Madame Ernest with such haughty disdain, was but too glad at such a moment to fly to her for consolation. Every one in the castle shunned her, and she read in their looks either disdain or ironical compassion. The notary had communicated to her the last wishes of the Baron. The Baron left all his fortune to his nearest relative, a cousin, who, he had believed, had died in foreign lands, but of whose return to Germany he had had authentic information; he left nothing to Maurice, so that that child was left in absolute dependence upon the new Baron, who was but a very distant relation. Madame de Kilberg was not even named in the will; the reason for which, it was whispered, was to be found in certain information which, a short time before his death, the Baron had received of the manner in which she had repaid his confidence.

Madame de Kilberg threw herself on Madame Ernest's neck; she called her, a thousand times, her good and only friend; flattered her in the most outrageous manner; implored her friendly offices with the new lord when he should arrive; entreated her to instruct Armand to be sure to praise Maurice to the new Baron whenever he had an opportunity, and conjured both mother and son to persuade all the neighbours to speak of her to the Baron in the most favourable terms. All this was opposed to common

sense, and Armand, as he listened to her wild and extravagant talk, could hardly believe his ears.

"It is true, then," he thought to himself, "that people who are proud and insolent in prosperity, lose all courage and all dignity in misfortune! Mamma was right when she told me so; but I could never have believed that the haughty Madame de Kilberg would let herself down so low, and show herself so cowardly and cringing."

Such were his reflections, but he kept them to himself, and did all in his power to cheer and console Maurice.

For five whole days did Madame de Kilberg continue to come and pass all her time with Madame Ernest. Nor did she restrain herself to lamentations alone; she gave way to furious invectives against the deceased; she who had eaten his bread for ten years, and whom he had loaded with benefits (he had paid her debts, which were considerable); she lavished upon him the most odious names, and accused him of every vice, and of almost every crime. Madame Ernest was shocked by such language, and told her so; but her spite, at the overthrow of her hopes, broke out anew again and again.

But the scene was suddenly and unexpectedly changed.

IV.

On the evening of the fifth day after the event we have just recorded, whilst Madame de Kilberg was at the house of her neighbour, the torrent of her lamentations was suddenly stopped by the entry of a young man into the room. This young man, whom Madame de Kilberg knew very well, though hitherto she had not deigned to cast a look upon him, was the notary's clerk. He first saluted Madame Ernest, then Madame de Kilberg, who, contrary to his expectation, replied by a tolerably gracious smile, for she had become polite to the common people, as she used to call them, since her disgrace, but not for long, as we shall see. Addressing himself to her, the young man said:

"My employer has instructed me to tell you that he has heard from the Baron de Rosenthal, who will arrive at the castle in a week; it is his desire that until that time you should resume your former authority, and my employer is instructed to deliver up to you the keys. All the servants are at your orders, and I think I hear the roll of the wheels of your carriage, which I have already ordered round for you."

Madame Ernest and Armand listened with pleasure

to these words, without perceiving that Maurice, transported with joy, was beginning to resume his haughty air. As for Madame de Kilberg, her countenance was radiant; joy seemed almost to suffocate her, and take from her the power of speech. It was with difficulty she uttered in a trembling voice these few words:

"And how is this letter signed? What is the name of this new lord?"

"Ernest, Baron of Rosenthal. He has taken the name of his cousin; it is one of the clauses of the will."

At the name of Ernest, Armand's mother sighed.

"And," pursued Madame de Kilberg, "the Baroness comes with him, no doubt, for he is married, I suppose, and has children?"

"No, madame; he is a widower, without children, and has made a vow, it is said, never to marry again."

Three bottles of Rhine wine swallowed successively, would not intoxicate a man so quickly, so violently, as those words intoxicated Madame de Kilberg. Her brain reeled, and her eyes flashed fire. She sprang towards Maurice, she pressed him convulsively to her heart, exclaiming:

"Oh! my Maurice, he will adopt you!"

Then she added, with a frown:

"Ah! those people at the castle who behaved so

contemptuously towards me, how I will make them repent their insolence!"

Then, as the carriage had by this time arrived in front of the door, she entered, or rather sprang into it, without addressing either to Madame Ernest or Armand a single word of farewell. Without even bestowing a look upon them, Maurice followed her.

"What!" said Armand, surprised, "are you going away too, without saying good-bye?"

Maurice turned, and bid him farewell ungraciously enough. He then jumped into the carriage by the side of his mother, who said to him:

"That little boy has got a habit of speaking to you too familiarly; you must break him of it—there is such a great distance between you and him. I will not have any more familiarity between you two. What would the Baron say if he saw the child he is going to adopt walking arm-in-arm with a boy like that, a common person's child? It might do you a great deal of harm."

The spoiled child received eagerly these hard counsels; he made no objection, and only replied:

"Yes, mamma."

As for Madame Ernest, far from taking offence at the abrupt departure of Madame de Kilberg and her son, she would have laughed heartily at it, if, in her mind, she had not foreseen a storm about to burst over her and Armand.

"That woman," she thought, "will become my enemy; she will never pardon me for having been the witness of her abject cowardice; she will always be in fear lest I should reveal the outrageous sentiments she uttered against her benefactor, whose memory is doubtless sacred to the relative to whom he has bequeathed his property. She will endeavour to repay me for the sympathy I showed her by injuring me; she will slander me; she will do more, perhaps. But God, if fresh misfortunes threaten us, will give me and my son strength to support them!"

Filled with these thoughts, she judged that the moment had arrived to strengthen Armand's heart, by placing confidence in him, and disclosing to him secrets which she had thought right to keep from him to this day.

As for him, he had remained tearful and vexed, speechless with sorrow and surprise at the cold and distant farewell of Maurice, and could not help saying at last:

"For five days, how affectionate Maurice has been to me! How he appeared to love me! I was reproaching myself for having thought him cold and indifferent; I was very foolish, I think, to reproach myself."

"Yes, you were wrong to believe that he had a good heart, after having heard him speak, as he did, against his benefactor. An ungrateful person, be he

man or boy, is never capable of friendship. But that last scene has produced a painful impression on us both. A walk to "The Cascade" will refresh us, and perhaps restore our equanimity. Come!"

They set out at once. Armand, lighthearted, bounded like a young fawn by the side of his mother. When they reached the cascade, Madame Ernest asked him to sit beside her on the grass; and after having prepared him to receive her confidence, she related the story of her life, which was, at the same time, his own.

The recital was a long and sorrowful one. This is the substance of it in a few words:

She was born in France. At the period of the great Revolution, her father and mother had emigrated to Germany, taking her with them. They had lost almost all their fortune, and had lived concealed in a village on the right bank of the Rhine. They both died, perhaps of grief at having left their native land; she remained alone with the nurse who had brought her up, the same who was still with her. A slender sum left by her mother sufficed for the support of them both; and she reserved, as a last resource in case of emergency, her mother's diamonds. A young German officer, named Ernest de Clary, whose regiment was stationed in the neighbourhood, had asked her hand during the lifetime of her parents. A year after their death, she had espoused him. Having

like herself, lost both father and mother, Ernest de Clary had not to ask any one's consent to his marriage. But the war between France and Germany was at that time raging in full fury. The French armies inundated the country; there was a succession of deadly combats. Ernest Clary, two months after his marriage, perished, as was believed, in one of these battles, for nothing was ever heard of him afterwards. In losing him, his unfortunate wife lost all; she could not even prove her marriage; the church in which it had been celebrated, the whole village, the priest, the witnesses, all had perished in the flames, or by the sword, on the day of that fatal combat. She could not obtain the slightest particle of her husband's fortune; M. de Clary's brother took possession of it, and even went so far as to threaten her with a ruinous lawsuit if she dared to bear his name. She therefore called herself simply Madame Ernest. She sold her mother's diamonds, bought a small annuity with two-thirds of the price, and with the other third purchased, in a secluded village, a small house, where she lived retired with her nurse and Armand, who was born eight months after his father's death. Some years after, the lord of the manor, who was very powerful, forced several of the inhabitants of this village, herself among the number, to sell their houses to him, to extend his park, then she came and settled at Rosenthal.

In the midst of her misfortunes, her confidence in God had never been shaken, and a secret hope sustained her courage: she flattered herself that perhaps her dear husband still lived, for his name had not been placed upon the list of killed; he might have been saved by a miracle, and Madame Ernest dreamed incessantly that she should yet have the happiness of seeing him return, and press her and Armand to his heart. It was a very feeble ray of hope, but it shone sweetly and softly on her heart in the night of grief and misery in which she was plunged.

Such was the story of this good and tender mother —a story often interrupted by her tears, with which Armand mingled his. She then rose, and turned towards the village, deep in thought. Armand, respecting her sorrows, walked silently by her side, reserving for the next day the thousand questions he burned to put to her.

V.

But the morrow brought many other events in its train.

During the whole of the night, Madame de Kilberg had never ceased to revolve in her mind the

most hostile projects against Madame Ernest and her son. The wicked almost always judge others by themselves. She thought they would make the abject misery in which they had seen her plunged a subject for triumph, and cause her to be laughed at in the neighbourhood for many a day. She shuddered with terror at the bare idea of what she could relate concerning her, if so inclined. A secret presentiment warned her that it was all over with her, should Madame Ernest have an interview with the Baron. At the same time, blinded by her foolish jealousy, she pictured to herself that if he saw the two children, Maurice would lose greatly by the comparison. These foolish thoughts and jealousies had engendered in her heart, against those two innocent persons, a mortal hatred and aversion. She dreamed all the night long of nothing but the means of driving them from the village, and thus abuse the authority which had just been restored to her.

She had no difficulty in inoculating with her venom the mind of her stupid and bad-disposed child, through whose agency she principally hoped to succeed in her scheme. She told him her plans and wishes, and he was not slow to profit by the lesson.

Armand was very far from foreseeing the storm which was about to burst over his head. He had received, during the last few days, so many marks of attachment from Maurice, that, in spite of the cold-

ness of his leave-taking the evening before, and in spite of all that his mother had said to him, he strove to believe still in his friendship.

He passed the whole of the morning in the company of his mother, to whom he felt more closely and tenderly drawn since the confidences of the preceding evening. He applied himself to his studies more diligently than ever, though his thoughts would occasionally wander to the subject of which his heart was so full.

Towards evening, astonished at not having seen anything of Maurice all day, he went out to look for him. They told him in the village that he had been seen walking in the direction of the forest, just above the spot where the cascade was, and thither he followed him.

He found Maurice indeed, and singularly enough engaged.

He was holding under him a young and stout lad, older than himself by two years, who made no effort to defend himself, and whom he was now beating furiously, by way, it would seem, of diverting himself.

At this sight Armand could not restrain a remonstrance; the lad took advantage of the interruption to get up from the ground, and appealed to Armand to intercede for him.

"Oh, Maurice," exclaimed Armand, "why do

you treat the boy thus? What has he done to you?"

"*What has he done to you?*" exclaimed Maurice, turning disdainfully round to Armand, and mimicking his words. "How dare you talk to me? Is that the way you poor village children speak to their future lord? For the future, my boy, recollect that to you, as well as to the other people of Rosenthal, I am *Mister* Maurice."

At this singular language, Armand did not know whether to burst out laughing, turn his back upon *Mister* Maurice, or pull his ears for him. The desire to laugh got the better of him, however; and he laughed heartily, and for a long time. When his fit was over:

"Really," said he, "when you call me *Mister* Armand, I will call you *Mister* Maurice. I will not be behindhand in politeness with you. But until then, you let that boy alone. I will not suffer you to thrash him like that before my eyes, without my defending him, I promise you. Come," he added, addressing himself to the boy, "tell me what you had done to offend him."

"Nothing at all, sir. The keeper gave me leave to cut some of the young shoots to bind the sheaves at harvest-time; Mr. Maurice found me doing it, and——"

"And I told you," angrily interrupted Maurice,

"that I would not permit vagabonds like you to destroy my relation's plantations, which will one day be mine. I care nothing for what the keeper told you, and will give him a good lecture for his impertinence. You deserve that I should have you put in prison for stealing the wood. I have full right here—yes, full right," he added, casting a haughty and disdainful look upon Armand; "and you, who have dared to answer me—I have begun to punish your insolence, but I have not finished. Do not stir, I forbid you!"

And to enjoy in its full plenitude the cruel pleasure of beating a boy much bigger than himself, and who dared not defend himself, as well as to brave Armand, Maurice sprang upon the poor boy, who trembled like a leaf, and gave him several violent blows. He was about to repeat the dose, when Armand indignantly threw himself between them; and as Maurice was then going to strike him, Armand, in self-defence, gave him such a well-directed blow with his fist, that the blood sprang from his nose, and lights danced before his eyes. Maurice, who had been accustomed to ill-treat all the boys in the village with impunity, was so surprised and so furious, that he continued to attack Armand, and to fight desperately. But as he always got the worst of it, he at last ran away, and returned in a very pretty plight to the castle.

Armand also returned to his home, sorrowful at having discovered what a bad heart Maurice had, distressed at having been obliged to fight him, and consequently much more sorry than proud of his victory, but far from dreading the consequences of it, for his conscience told him plainly that his conduct was above reproach.

But he did not appreciate the character of Madame de Kilberg.

When she saw her dear boy come home with his nose bleeding, his face disfigured, his eye blackened, and altogether quite a sight for a doting mother, she at first shrieked till she was heard all over the castle, and roared with grief and rage.

Then all at once recovering herself, she laughed for joy.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "I have found what I was seeking. I have got what I wanted. Before another week is over, I shall be rid of both mother and son."

In fact, she had just been informed that two of the grooms, concealed behind the trees, had been witnesses of the scene. Delighted to see the wicked Maurice, who often kicked them, beaten himself, they had carefully avoided interfering, and they knew perfectly that Armand was not in the least in the wrong. These two stable-boys were themselves but worthless fellows. Madame de Kilberg sent for them, and said:

"You deserve to be dismissed on the spot; but I pardon you on one condition, and that is, that you speak the truth: for you saw all. Yes," she added, looking at them fixedly, "you saw the son of that woman Ernest, and another boy who had been stealing wood in the forest, fall unexpectedly upon my son; you saw them overpower him with blows from which he could not defend himself. You are ready to bear witness upon oath to his innocence, and the brutal aggression of those two young vagabonds. Come, I see, after all, you are brave fellows, and good and faithful servants. See, here is money for each of you."

VI.

How shall we describe the consternation of Madame Ernest, when, on the following day, the notary's clerk brought her a piece of most unexpected and unwelcome intelligence?

Madame de Kilberg had drawn up a complaint; had presented it to the magistrate of the village, and had called upon him to pronounce upon it immediately. Armand was accused of being in league with a young stealer of wood, of whom he had been long suspected of being an accomplice. They had together, it was said, fallen upon Maurice de Kilberg, who

wanted to prevent the robbery. They had both maltreated Maurice in a frightful manner, and he might perhaps have been killed on the spot, if two of the castle servants, who from a distance had viewed the commencement of the fray, had not run to his assistance. They had raised Maurice, and brought him back, bruised and bleeding, to the castle; they had brought also the stolen twigs, in proof that this aggression had for its object the protection of a theft. They were both ready to affirm these facts before the Judge, on oath. Armand and his accomplices would infallibly be condemned to two months' imprisonment. The parents of the young thief, whose sole means of livelihood was the work they obtained from the castle, would be driven from the neighbourhood.

As Madame Ernest, pale with terror, tremblingly listened to this exposure of an infernal plot, and from time to time raised her eyes to Heaven, as if calling on it to witness her child's innocence, the young clerk added:

"Madame, this all seems clear enough to me. My employer regrets it as much as I do; but the Judge, who perhaps at the bottom of his heart thinks with us, will be compelled to declare your son guilty; the evidence of the grooms is overwhelming. The Judge will find himself, however reluctantly, constrained to send Armand to prison. Calm yourself,"

he added, seeing that the unhappy mother was bathed in tears; "there is but one means of saving him; are you willing to employ it?"

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed; "I will shrink from nothing to save my son from this unjust sentence. It would be his death. What must I do?"

"My employer perfectly divines the motive of the woman who is persecuting you; it is your departure that she wants. She has told him so; she has confessed it, and this is what I am instructed to propose to you: If you will undertake to quit Rosenthal with your son, before the arrival of the new Baron, Madame de Kilberg will withdraw her complaint this very evening; the proceedings already commenced will be quashed. My employer will take upon himself to find a purchaser for your house. They will also stop all proceedings against the boy who was cutting the switches in the forest, and will continue to employ his family in the service of the castle. Well, madame," continued the young man, with tears in his eyes (for the sight of so much injustice on the one side, and so much misfortune on the other, inspired him at once with indignation and with pity), "do you consent to leave?"

Madame Ernest, having recovered her self-possession, replied in a calm voice:

"I yield to violence, since, a stranger, and without protection, I am incapable of resisting it. I will

spare my son an unmerited punishment; I will spare the ruin of a poor family; and I will spare your magistrate the odium of an iniquitous sentence. God will find means, sooner or later, to punish this tyranny, ingratitude, and perjury. Before the week has expired I shall have quitted Rosenthal."

The young man withdrew, full of admiration of conduct so firm and dignified.

It really seemed as though God bestowed upon Madame Ernest strength to support this fresh reverse of fortune. Armand was at first panic-struck when he learnt the fate that had threatened him, as well as the innocent lad whose defence he had undertaken; and he wept much when his mother told him they were going to set out together for a fresh exile. But Madame Ernest's courage strengthened and supported his; his mother's generous and self-sacrificing resignation produced a corresponding effect on his young heart, and he felt with her, that it is easy to support misfortune if only you have the consciousness of not having deserved it.

From that moment he quietly aided her to make all the preparations for their departure.

And what was Madame de Kilberg doing all this time?

In proportion as her two victims were calm and self-possessed in their misfortune, so much was she agitated and beside herself at the success of her

scheme. But still she was uneasy. She was disturbed by a secret terror, and was restless and unsettled. The preparations for the reception of the new lord went forward. She had erected at the entrance to the village a superb triumphal arch of evergreens and flowers. There the burgomaster, the magistrate, the notary and all the inhabitants, were to meet the new lord, offer him their congratulations, burn powder in his honour, and above all, make him a pompous speech in praise of Madame de Kilberg and of Maurice. She had given each his lesson; had circulated threats against any one who did not extol loudly her sweetness, her modesty, her generosity, her gratitude. She went about everywhere with a smiling and affable manner, which seemed to say:

"You see how good, amiable, and generous I am. You know it, do not forget it; bear witness to it; tell the new Baron that I am adored by all the village."

And holding Maurice by the hand, she said, so as to be heard by every one:

"Here is a brave and worthy youth! Here is the pearl of the youth of Germany! Will you not be happy to have him for your lord, some day? Yes; I know it. Well then, do not forget to say as much to his uncle; for the new Baron is a very near relation of Maurice. I may even go so far as to say he is his nephew."

Maurice, who in his battle with Armand had been more frightened than hurt, was now completely recovered from the effects of it, with the exception of a dark circle round the eye. He had to play an important part on the all-eventful day. He was, at the precise moment when the Baron arrived beneath the triumphal arch, to recite a complimentary speech—a masterpiece composed by the village schoolmaster.

But it was all in vain for his mother to make him repeat this speech a dozen times a day, he could not succeed in saying two sentences consecutively without breaking down. She was in despair.

"Well, madame, after all," said the fawning schoolmaster, "is it necessary for a young nobleman like your son to have a memory like the children of common people? In general, talented people have not much memory, and your son is very talented. Make your mind easy, all will go well. I will keep near him, concealed behind the evergreens, and I will prompt him."

VII.

The great day was at length about to dawn—that day which was to shine on the complete triumph of Madame de Kilberg, and the defeat and flight of her victim.

The evening before this important day, that is to say, about four o'clock in the afternoon, Maurice resolved to put into execution a black design which he had formed, but of which he was careful not to speak to his mother, for fear that, wicked as she was, she might throw some impediment in the way.

"To-morrow, before daybreak," said he to himself, "Armand and his mother are to depart. That is enough for mamma, but it is not enough for me. He has beaten me, and I will not keep his blows. Before he goes, I should like to pay them back to him. Yes, I will make his nose bleed, tear his ear, blacken his eye, and in fact, give him a regular good thrashing. That is the only thing that can satisfy me. But no imprudence; I must play a safe game."

He called the children belonging to some of the castle servants, older than himself by two or three years, strong and sturdy lads. They were two little scamps, and were only too eager to obey him, when he said:

"You know the cascade in the wood; Armand is sure to go there this evening, to bid farewell to his favourite walk. There he will assume his sentimental, victim-like air, and no doubt," he added, with a mocking laugh, "the poor exile will mingle his tears with the waters of the cascade; for he is, like his mother, a famous hypocrite. But I want to make him shed some real, scalding tears. Now you

are to go and hide in the forest, near the cascade I will come towards Armand quite alone; he will suspect nothing; the simpleton will perhaps imagine that I have come to say good-bye to him. Ah! I will make him remember my good-bye! At a signal that I will give, do you throw yourselves suddenly upon him; you hold fast his arms and legs, and leave the rest to me."

As this wicked boy had foreseen, Armand, as evening approached, came to bid farewell to that delightful spot where he had so often been with his mother, and had received pleasure and instruction from her sweet and gentle teaching, and pious resignation.

"Farewell!" he exclaimed, "fresh, green grass, on which I have so often sat beside my mother! Farewell, limpid and pure cascade, image of her calm and spotless life! Farewell, fine old forest; we quit you, but your memory will never be absent from us."

These were not precisely his expressions, but such was the meaning of his words; and he was uttering them aloud, when he was suddenly interrupted by a burst of mocking laughter: it was Maurice, who suddenly appeared before him.

"And me," said he, "do you not say good-bye to me, who loves you so much? Have you no message to send to my mother? No assurance of

your gratitude? Ah! what an absurd figure you cut, with your goggle eyes and your milksop face! Look at yourself in your favourite cascade; you'll see a handsome chap there, I warrant you."

Armand endeavoured to restrain his anger; he calmly surveyed Maurice from head to foot with the coolest contempt, and said in a calm voice, "You laugh at our misfortune, after having caused it: but God will punish you, sooner perhaps than you think for. You tell me to look in that cascade; look there yourself. If that limpid water, instead of representing the features of your face, could mirror the image of your soul, you could not contemplate it without horror."

"Ah! unknown rascal! son of an adventuress do you insult me?" exclaimed Maurice. "Help!"

Instantly, the two lads who were lying in ambush, sprang from their hiding-place, fell upon Armand, seized him; and his cowardly enemy was about to satiate his rage, when he was stopped by an unexpected intervention of Providence.

A voice was heard and a man appeared. He was a stranger, who, hidden behind some tall poplars, had witnessed, unseen, the whole of this scene.

"What are you doing, you cowards?" he exclaimed. "What! three against one!"

This stranger, who was evidently a person of distinction, had a noble and martial air; indignation

flashed from his eyes, and his imposing and dignified bearing made the culprits tremble.

The two boys soon let go of Armand and took to their heels.

Maurice also turned away, muttering with rage, "There are some people who are always interfering in what does not concern them. But beware, Armand; wherever you go, I shall know how to find you. My friends are powerful, yours were no doubt tramps. We have not settled our accounts yet. Look to yourself." And as he retreated, he turned back twice to shake his fist at Armand, and cast a scowling look upon the stranger.

The latter, left alone with Armand, said to him, "Can that boy be Maurice de Kilberg?"

"Yes, sir," replied Armand.

"Oh!" said the stranger, apparently much surprised, and watching Maurice's retreating form, "He seems to be a very bad boy. And those young rascals who had fallen upon you, my lad, it was no doubt he who had placed them here for that purpose?"

"I do not know," replied Armand, whose frank and generous soul revolted from accusing any one without proof; and who did not like to speak evil of any one, even of the wicked.

"But he spoke of you as unknown, the son of an adventuress. Why did he insult you thus? What

had you done to him, my good boy?" he kindly added, seeing that at these questions, Armand's eyes were filling with tears. "Do not suspect me of idle curiosity; the words you addressed to Maurice struck me as so good and sensible, that I have taken a sincere interest in you. Speak; I have some right to know what goes on here, and if you have been wronged, I am not without the power to repair it. Sit down beside me on this mossy carpet, and speak to me with confidence."

How could Armand resist giving all his confidence to this stranger? It was not alone the nobility and distinction of his manners, the caressing softness of his glance, the tone of his voice which operated upon the boy; there was something in the whole person of the new comer that had an inexplicable charm which attracted Armand; it seemed already as if this man was no stranger to him, but as if he had known him long, and been accustomed to esteem him. To deny or conceal from him anything was not in his power. He related, therefore, but calmly and without any irritation, the persecution which his mother had undergone; the unjust sentence they had intended to pass on him, and the embarrassing situation in which his mother and himself were about to be placed, not knowing where to seek an asylum; without relations, without friends in this foreign land.

The unknown listened with the deepest attention, and seemed scarcely able to take his eyes off Armand; for this youth had already entirely won his confidence and esteem.

"Yes," continued Armand, stifling a sob, but speaking fast with excitement and indignation, "and as for the insulting names he called me—is it—yes, is it because my mother is a Frenchwoman, who married a brave German officer—because my father died fighting for his country—because the village where their marriage was celebrated was destroyed by the flames—because she has not been able to prove her marriage—because—— ?"

At these words Armand stopped short; for the stranger, a prey to the most violent emotion, turning pale and red by turns, and trembling all over, caught him in his arms and passionately embraced him, then replacing him by his side said, in a voice broken by emotion:

"Stop, stop! I want but one more word from you; a word which will decide the fate of my future life. Oh! will it be the word I burn to hear? But you do not understand me. Can you not comprehend? Quick, tell me, tell me the name of your mother!"

"My mother," said the boy, surprised beyond measure, and scarcely able to account for his own sensations; "my mother's name is Madame Ernest de Clary."

What words can paint the emotion of the stranger at the sound of this name? It seemed to him, in his rapture, as if heaven was opening for him, and casting upon Armand a look full of ineffable tenderness, he said, "Look at yourself in the crystal stream of that cascade, and then look at me."

And Armand did so, and recognised between the stranger's features and his own such a resemblance that his heart leapt all at once with surprise, hope, and joy.

"Is it possible! Can you be my father's brother? Can you be——?"

"*I am your father!*" he exclaimed, clasping Armand to his heart and weeping with joy, "Your father, who, for thirteen years, has been the most unfortunate, and is to-day the happiest of men. But come, conduct me to your mother."

At the same time he called, "Fritz!"

A servant who was close at hand with two horses appeared.

"Fritz! my faithful Fritz, I am the happiest of men. I will explain all to you later. Take back the horses as quickly as possible, and return speedily and procure me a carriage in the village of Rosenthal. Inquire for the house of Madame Ernest, and bring it there."

He then walked rapidly towards the house with Armand; he sent him in at first alone to his mother,

to prepare her by degrees to receive him, for fear that the excess of joy might prove fatal to her. He told him to say to her at first, that a stranger had announced to him that his father still lived; then, that this stranger had come himself to bring the intelligence; then, that his father himself was there, and finally to introduce him. All these instructions Armand fulfilled with equal caution and tact.

VIII.

It is not possible to express the joy of Madame Clary, when she pressed her beloved husband, so long mourned for, in her arms. The joy might have proved fatal to her, but, thanks to the prudent precautions which had been taken to prepare her for it, she was able to support her happiness; and the husband, the wife, and the child, henceforth reassured as to their future fate, mingled their tears of joy, and their fervent thanksgivings.

How many things had they to relate to each other! On the evening of the fatal battle which had shattered their existence hitherto, Ernest Clary was left for dead upon the field; nevertheless, he breathed still. The humanity of a French soldier saved him. This soldier, just as he was about to be buried with

heaps of slain, thought he remarked a faint and almost imperceptible sign of life. He generously, and like a brave fellow as he was, begged one of his comrades to aid him to transport the body to the hospital. The wounded man remained for more than three months hovering between life and death, without being able to articulate a word, or give any information as to who he was. His cure was a miracle of the surgical art; but this cure was extremely slow, and it was only at the end of two years that he entirely recovered his intellectual and physical strength. He then returned into Germany. His brothers were obliged to surrender his patrimony to him; but they either could not, or would not give him any intelligence of the wife they had so unkindly treated, for they dreaded his reproaches and his anger; they even gave him to understand that she had perished in the conflagration which had consumed the village. But he refused to believe it, and, under the impression that she might perhaps have returned to her native land, he sought for her all over France during six years. He then returned to seek for her in Germany, still in vain; and hope was almost extinct in his heart, when in consequence of the wickedness of Maurice, he found himself led into a conversation with Armand—a conversation which had the effect, for both mother and son, of putting an end to their misfortune.

It is thus that the perversity of the wicked is often the very means that Providence employs to punish them, and to save their victims.

"Dear wife," said M. de Clary, as he finished his recital, "you have promised to quit this house before daybreak. You shall quit it with me this very instant, to receive the hospitality worthy of you at a neighbouring castle, where one of my best friends resides. To-morrow we will return together, and take possession of our own castle, for it is you who are Baroness of Rosenthal. I have been obliged to change my name since the decease of the late lord, who, on bequeathing me this domain, which descends from a maternal ancestor of ours, imposed on me this condition. His mother and mine were sisters, for I am born of a different mother to my brother who so cruelly repulsed you. He thought me dead, and when he heard of my return from France, he recollected the rights accruing to me from so near a relationship. To-morrow I am to make my entry into the castle of my ancestors. But I wished this evening, without being known, to visit some parts of this domain, and to make some inquiries concerning Madame de Kilberg, of whom I have recently heard some very ill reports. I see they have not been exaggerated. As to Maurice, I should never have thought there could have been such a bad disposition in our family at so young an age."

"Oh, father," exclaimed Armand, "pardon him, I beg of you; he is not wicked by nature; he has been spoiled; he has been filled with pride, and that has made him spiteful and malicious; but he is not altogether bad; he will reform, and become worthy of your kindness."

The Baron only replied to his son by a fond caress; and at this moment the carriage brought by Fritz arrived in front of the door. They all three entered it, and repaired to the adjoining castle.

Madame Ernest had learned without emotion that she was henceforth to live in grandeur and opulence, and she remained as modest and simple as before: she was only alive to the happiness of her husband and son.

The same evening Madame de Kilberg was informed that the woman whom she detested was gone; but she was very far from guessing the change that had taken place in her destiny.

"Very good," said she; "she has shown a readiness to execute my orders for which I give her full credit. To reward her, I will consent that the authorities of the village to which she is gone shall only be told that her son is an insolent and good-for-nothing boy; I will not add that he is a thief; although he is so, since he was in league with a young thief to rob my forest. But they tell me that the woman Ernest went away in a coach! She in a

coach! how could that be? I cannot understand it; probably some old cart belonging to one of the farmers. But no matter—let us think only of to-morrow's festival, and of the praises they will lavish on my son. Come, dear Maurice, let me hear you recite your speech."

But the dear Maurice did not feel disposed. He was as disobedient as he was idle; the infallible consequence of an education such as he had received; besides, had not the schoolmaster promised to prompt him? The evening finished therefore by a tolerably sharp contest between the mother and the son—a thing of by no means rare occurrence.

Early next morning all Rosenthal was astir. The triumphal arch was magnificently decorated. All the inhabitants pressed eagerly towards it, attired in their holiday clothes. On a platform, to elevate her above the crowd, proudly strutted Madame de Kilberg, fluttering with hope, and swollen with pride, with Maurice by her side, and close behind Maurice, hidden by the evergreens, was the schoolmaster, in readiness to come to the aid of his treacherous memory.

All at once the sound of a horse's hoofs was heard, and in the midst of a cloud of dust appeared a rider, who, on arriving at the triumphal arch, drew rein, and cried:

"Here is the Baron; he is in an open carriage with his lady, the Baroness, and his son, your future lord."

These words were received with a general shout of enthusiasm. But Madame de Kilberg could not believe the evidence of her own ears. Was there not some mistake? A chill ran through her veins, and the garlands of flowers she was holding dropped from her hands. What! there was a Baroness! there was a child!

"No, no," she at length exclaimed, "never mind him, Maurice; the man is tipsy, and does not know what he is saying;" and, flushed and distracted, she strained her eyes along the road, where soon an open carriage appeared in sight, drawn by six superb horses, at full gallop. Can she believe her eyes? Yes, there is a Baroness, and it is Madame Ernest!

Yes, there is a child, and it is Armand! At this sight, her head swam; a mist came over her eyes. Losing all consciousness, she fell headlong from the platform, dragging Maurice with her. They raised them, all bruised and bleeding from their fall, a prey to convulsions of rage and disappointment, and carried them to the small house lately occupied by Madame Ernest.

The Baron would have left the mother and son to their condition; but the Baroness interceded so warmly in their behalf, that he at length consented

to give Madame de Kilberg the means of living in a cottage, some sixty miles off. As for Maurice, who came creeping to Armand to beg his pardon, Armand raised him, embraced him, and persuaded his father to place him in a college, and to promise to provide him with an honourable career, if he proved he merited it by an entire change of character and disposition.

The two grooms who had been bribed to bear false witness protested that they should never have maintained their testimony before the magistrate, had they been brought forward; they were compelled to give the money they had received to the poor; they promised to become honest men, and they kept their promise.

The father of the young lad they had calumniated was appointed gamekeeper; while the boy himself, attached to the private service of Armand, received a good education, and became subsequently one of the stewards on the estate.

The Baron, his wife, and his son, reunited at length, after so many trials and reverses, enjoyed the most perfect felicity that can be attained upon earth; for their happiness was the fruit of virtue. They often in their walks visited the cascade in the woods which had been witness of one of the most important events in their life; they loved to contemplate that limpid water, which was not

calmer than their conscience, nor purer than their hearts.

And the filial piety of Armand, which had mingled so much sweetness in his mother's cup of bitterness, was, in the days of his parents' prosperity, the source of their purest joys, and the crown of their happiness.

A MOTHER'S KISS.

Throughout the reign of childhood years,
Its tender woes, its transient tears,
Which mars its smiling bliss;
Oh! what is that so sweetly found,
A soothing balm for every wound?
It is—a mother's kiss!

A mother's kiss!—oh! sweeter far
Than morning's sun or evening star,
Or aught that tongue e'er tells;
It gladdens more than morning light,
Or that endearing ray at night,
And every gloom dispels.

A mother's tender kiss impressed,
Can charm to peace the troubled rest
Of one so loved, so fair;
Those smiles, on seraph pinions bright,
Upon the lips again will light,
And sweetly frolic there

And when the years have passed away,
And childhood's feet have learned to stray
To seek the violets sweet;
A mother's kiss, so kind and true,
Is last to bid a fond adieu,
And first at home to greet.

Clara Falkland:

A TALE OF 1665

Clara Falkland:

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CHAPTER I.

THERE was not a more excellent and generous-hearted girl than Clara Falkland; and yet, strange to say, though she had lost her mother, and was not married, she lived in the City of York, more than two hundred miles from London, where her father's town-house was.

What could be the cause of this separation between two beings so nearly related to each other?

A designing, grasping, and ill-disposed woman had married Mr. Falkland's only son, and having established herself in her father-in-law's house, had taken the reins of management in her own hands. After the death of her young husband (which occurred soon after her marriage), she retained the control of the establishment, and taking advantage of the ascendancy gained over her father-in-law, had persuaded him to send away his only remaining child, Clara, with whom she declared she could not live. Mr. Falkland, at her suggestion, and on pretext of the

respect due to an old aunt, who lived at York, and from whom the family had considerable expectations, consented to this arrangement, and had sent Clara to her.

This being accomplished, Clara's wicked and jealous sister-in-law strove more and more to alienate Mr. Falkland's heart from her. She even went so far as to intercept the letters which they wrote to each other: and if they contained anything contrary to her purpose, she did not scruple to destroy them.

Mr. Falkland was therefore left to imagine that his daughter nourished feelings of unkindness and resentment against him; while, on her side, Clara had reason to believe that her father had grown indifferent towards her, and no longer loved her.

She did not really believe this, however; such a thought found no entrance into a heart so pure and tender as hers; only, finding herself so cruelly neglected, she began to feel very unhappy.

While thus banished, so to speak, to York, a prey to profound melancholy, a gloomy report was beginning to be circulated in the town; it was whispered that a fearful pestilence was decimating London.

The report was only too true. It was in 1665; the year that the terrible plague broke out in London, which ravaged the northern part of that great city, and carried off in a few months a hundred thousand of its inhabitants.

At first in York, as in every other part of England, this fatal news was only communicated with great reserve and in whispers; every one tacitly agreed to conceal the calamity, or at least to soften the gravity of it, by not raising unnecessary alarm.

But the contagion spread with fearful rapidity; the reports became so alarming, that it was impossible to check their circulation. In spite of all the precautions that had been taken to conceal the truth from Clara, she at length became aware of it in all its terrible reality.

She was at first struck with horror at the dreadful intelligence, but rapidly recovering her self-possession, and displaying a strength of mind superior to her sex and age, her resolution was immediately taken.

Without deliberation or hesitation, she went instantly to her aunt and said:

"The plague has broken out in London: my father is perhaps still in that city; I must go to him."

And as she foresaw the objections her aunt would make, she did not give her time to utter them, but added immediately:

"If he be exposed to the contagion, it is for me to try and protect him from it; if he be ill, it is for me to nurse and watch over him. Who has so much right as I? To none can this duty be so sacred as to me, and none can fulfil it so well. I will set out this very evening. What else can be done? Write? Who knows

if I should get an answer? And while I am waiting for it here, what may be happening? You will tell me, that perhaps my father has already quitted London, that he is in safety. Oh! that I could be sure of it! But as I am in doubt, I must set off. I must set off instantly. Have no fears for me, dear aunt, I will not go and throw myself inconsiderately into the midst of danger. Before entering London I will stop some hours in one of the suburbs. There I will find means to gain some intelligence of my father. If I learn that he has been able to quit the city, I will return to you. If he is there still, believe me, I will do my duty.

Her aunt, seeing her resolution was not to be shaken, knew words were useless to persuade her to give up the project; but she could not help praising her devotion and self-sacrifice.

"Dear child," she said, "you are running into the midst of a peril from which others are fleeing; but it is your duty, I admit it. Alas! who knows if I shall ever see you again in this world?

Her eyes filled with tears as she spoke; she added:

"Recollect, you owe it to yourself and me, not to run any unnecessary risk. If you peril your life for your father, in obedience to the sacred call of filial affection, take every precaution that prudence dictates to preserve yourself from contagion."

While the generous and heroic girl was hastily making preparations for her journey, her aunt was having a consultation, on her account, with a celebrated physician of York: this physician had recently returned from those countries in the East which are periodically devastated by the plague. He minutely explained the best remedies to employ for the treatment of this fearful malady, and the means to be taken for preservation from its attacks.

Clara's good aunt carefully repeated to her all his instructions, giving her at the same time a case of medicines prepared by this skilful and learned doctor; she then embraced her niece, and with many tears, promised that she would offer up daily fervent prayers to the Almighty on her behalf—then fastening round her neck a little gold cross, which had been an heirloom in the family for many generations, she suffered her to depart, having invoked all the blessings of Heaven upon her head, and wishing her God-speed.

Clara set out on her journey, attended by an old man-servant and a waiting-maid, who willingly promised to accompany her as far as the suburb near London, where she was to stop for some hours; but at the same time, they declared that nothing would induce them to enter those quarters of the town where the plague was raging. Clara, indeed, did not ask it of them. She knew that she had a right to expose her own life, but not theirs.

The road by which she approached London was thronged with fugitives, all hastening to escape, carrying with them the most valuable portions of their property: and they looked with astonishment, mingled with terror, upon Clara, who was proceeding in the direction of a place so dreaded and shunned.

Upon the countenances of all these fugitives, despair and terror were depicted. Many of them wailed and sobbed aloud, and uttered from time to time expressions of passionate grief. It was easy to understand that they had been bereaved of beloved relatives by the fearful visitation.

Some stopped in their rapid flight to cast mournful and anxious looks behind, as if they accused themselves of having abandoned the beings they best loved on earth, and as if they reproached themselves with the selfishness of their departure. Some might also be discerned, whose pale cheeks, purple lips, and hollow eyes, proclaimed that, without knowing it, they were carrying with them the evil from which they sought to escape.

Heartrending as was this spectacle, yet so far from weakening the courage of Clara, it only seemed to redouble it.

She was driven considerably out of her way in order to halt as near as possible to the southern part of London, where it would be easy for her to gain some intelligence of her father. She sent her servant

to that part of the town, called Southwark, which, as she was assured, the contagion had not yet reached; and, while he was gone, she pondered over, till she knew by heart every word of what her aunt had repeated to her concerning her consultation with the York physician.

After the lapse of a few hours, the servant returned, and informed Clara that the pestilence had not yet shown itself in the extensive district of Southwark, separated from the City of London by the Thames. Clara immediately repaired thither, her man-servant and maid consenting to follow her.

In the streets of Southwark, the people were collected together in groups, relating, with hushed voice, and bated breath, accounts of the ravages of the scourge; they were adding frightful details of the cruelties and the crimes committed, from thirst of gain and plunder, not only by hordes of thieves and ruffians, but even, horrible to relate, by the sick-nurses and the watchmen of the unhappy beings who were not able to defend themselves.

Clara shuddered as she listened to these recitals.

She gained, however, certain and valuable information. The plague had for some days been raging terribly in the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields (then a fashionable part of the town), where her father's house was situate. But had he left London? Was he attacked with the malady? His daughter-in-law,

his servants—were they with him? These questions none could answer.

She resolved to go alone and ascertain the facts for herself.

As night approached, she left behind her servant and the maid who had accompanied her so far, and, by the offer of a considerable sum of money, she engaged a man with a horse and vehicle, who undertook to convey her to the dreaded spot, and having crossed the river, she entered the locality ravaged by the scourge.

II.

Everywhere on her way, Clara encountered beings, the living images of desolation and terror.

It was early in the month of August; not a breath of wind freshened the sultry atmosphere, not a drop of rain had fallen for two months; the heat was intense and overwhelming, even the poor animal that drew them seemed exhausted.

Clara at length reached an inn, situated a little distance from the district in which was her father's mansion. The house was airy and detached, having no communication with the surrounding buildings, and, in consequence, as healthy as could be desired under the present circumstances. Clara stopped there to rest the horse, and also to make inquiries.

She tremblingly asked the landlord if he knew anything concerning her father. Alas! her worst fears were but too well founded. . . . . Mr. Falkland had been attacked by the contagion; his unworthy daughter-in-law had abandoned him: profiting by the weakness which confined him to his bed, she had possessed herself of the money, the valuable old plate, the richest articles of furniture, and of all the linen which was in the house, and had had several chariots loaded under pretext that, like many others, the family were going to remove from London. The servants had fled the house on the first appearance of the plague; one honest servant only, who had been but a short time in the service of the unfortunate Mr. Falkland, had remained with him. His miserable daughter-in-law had led the neighbours to believe that she was going to consult a physician, to ascertain if it would be possible to remove her father-in-law. She had therefore encountered no obstacle in plundering the house; but, on the contrary, they had assisted her in carrying everything away.

The grief of Clara at this terrible recital may be easily imagined, as also how she congratulated herself in having obeyed, without hesitation, the voice of conscience, and having thus arrived in time to watch over her poor father, so shamefully deserted and betrayed!

She purchased at once of the landlord all the linen he could spare; but what was her vexation and distress when the latter, on seeing her busily packing up all these articles, said to her:

"Excuse me, miss, what are you going to do with all these things? Do you think you can obtain admission to your father's house? You will not be permitted to enter it. All communication with the unfortunate creatures stricken with the plague is forbidden. No one is allowed to come out, and no one is permitted to go in. Numerous watchmen are appointed to see these rigorous, but necessary, measures carried out."

In spite of the landlord's opinion, Clara, however, more anxious than ever, but still inspired by the same courage and devotion, had all her packages placed in the vehicle. With the assistance of the worthy landlord, she then mounted herself, he saluting her with the greatest respect, and wishing her health and success.

When she reached the neighbourhood of her home, she scarcely recognised the place, though it was but two years since she quitted it. All the houses were closed, while upon by far the greater number of the doors was to be seen a red cross, with this inscription: "Lord have Mercy upon us!"

The streets were deserted, and grass was growing between the paving stones. A few faces wearing

the stamp of death appeared occasionally at the windows, from whose pale lips the only words that issued were: "Pray for us!" Men, carrying in their hands a red wand to give notice that it was dangerous to approach them, patrolled the streets with slow and measured steps, uttering as they passed the dreadful cry, "Bring out your dead!" They were followed by vehicles, on which were hastily piled the unhappy victims of the pestilence, and who were hurriedly interred in a vast pit, without any religious ceremony to bring consolation to the hearts of those who mourned their loss.

Clara shuddered with horror as she saw the first of these dismal dead-carts pass her.

"Alas!" thought she, "how can I be certain that that dreadful cart, loaded with so many hapless victims, does not contain——"

She dared not confess, even to herself, the object of her terror, but pressed her hands upon her eyes as if to shut out the thought.

The bare idea was heart-breaking, and she conjured her guide to redouble his speed. He consented very willingly, for he longed to arrive, and to get away again as quickly as possible from this pestilential locality.

The church clock had just struck nine, when Clara reached the street where her father's house was situate. This house, the front of which faced

the main street, formed the corner of a narrow lane.

Clara, in order not to attract attention, begged her guide to drive the cart up this lane, and she then tremblingly repaired on foot to the door of the house. She saw, with indescribable anguish, that the door was branded with the terrible red cross: close by was stationed a watchman, whose duty it was to prevent any one from leaving the house, or entering it.

Clara knew not what course to take to induce this man to disobey this order, which he was obliged to observe under pain of the most severe penalties.

She resolved, nevertheless, to address him. She should at least learn if Mr. Falkland still lived; and who could say if she might not be able to inspire him with some pity for a devoted daughter flying to the succour of a beloved father?

She dared not offer him money, for she trembled lest he should be one of those wretches who were so much talked of, and might be capable, on seeing that she had gold about her, of killing her as well as her father.

There was a dark lantern in the vehicle. Clara went to look for it, and brought it in her hand. She was dressed in black, and wore upon her head a long white flowing veil. She had taken this precaution in order that her father might not recognise her upon

"The darkness, the dress she wore, the lantern she carried in her hand caused the watchman to start back."—*P.* 77.

"Does he still live?"

"I do not know. I believe so: I hope so."

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Clara, with a sob.

The watchman seemed touched with compassion, and there was an unsteadiness in his voice as he added:

"But we must not be too sanguine; there is not much hope. The servant who waited on him must be dead, for I have neither seen nor heard anything of her for some hours. The doctor who attended Mr. Falkland, and who has just fallen a victim himself, did not think he could recover."

In spite of this disheartening intelligence, Clara felt her courage reviving.

"I conjure you," she exclaimed; "suffer me to enter. I have travelled more than 200 miles to be with him. I come to nurse him—to save him. I am his daughter."

"His daughter!" exclaimed the watchman, with visible emotion. "Oh, if I dared permit you! But no, I cannot, I dare not! No, I am forbidden. . . It is impossible."

"Have pity on me!" interrupted Clara; "do not refuse me, I implore you. Open this door to me, and do not prevent a daughter from seeing her dying father, perhaps from saving him. I entreat you, in the name of your mother, if, happier than I, you still possess one"

"Yes, yes," said the watchman, with tears in his eyes; "I have still my mother, my beloved mother; and I too, if she were in danger, I would risk my life to save hers. . . . . No, I have not the heart to refuse you."

And having ascertained that no one was at that moment passing in the street:

"Enter," said he, unlocking the door: "and the blessing of Heaven go with you!"

The door was opened, but not without difficulty, something seemed to impede it, and Clara's heart froze within her when she discovered behind it the body of the poor servant, who had perished in that place.

Clara strove to subdue her emotion, and whilst the watchman was seeing to the body being taken away, she rushed towards her father's chamber.

When she reached the door, she stopped for a moment: she listened, not a sound; she opened the door softly, and entered.

III.

The room was dark, and it was easy to perceive that it had not been ventilated by the admission of fresh air, for probably some days.

Clara tremblingly approached the bed. She listened eagerly, and heard the sick man breathe, and even turn restlessly in his bed.

Life was not then extinct! There was still some hope! Clara hastily descended to the street-door. She pointed out to the watchman the spot where she had left the vehicle that had brought her, and he undertook to go and fetch all the packages that were in it. She requested him to begin by bringing a basket, in which were all the different medicines which had been prepared by the York physician.

The watchman begged her, in the meantime, not to show herself at the door, lest it might be discovered that he had allowed her to enter. A few moments after, he brought her what she was so impatiently expecting.

Clara went up to her father's chamber, and seated herself at the furthest extremity of it, for she dared not venture to look at him until she had prepared the remedies which he might require, and she read and re-read the good physician's instructions.

When everything was prepared, summoning all her courage and presence of mind, she took in her hand a taper, which she had lit at her lantern, and approaching the bed gently, drew aside one of the curtains.

But when her eyes fell upon those beloved features,

upon which the pestilence had worked such a fearful change, she could not restrain an exclamation of grief. This cry seemed to awaken Mr. Falkland from a sort of lethargic slumber, and she hastened to let down her veil, for fear he should recognise her face. But this precaution was unnecessary; he was in no condition to recognise any one.

She took his hand, and feeling his skin dry, his pulse quick and irregular, she decided on giving him a sudorific draught, which was recommended in such a case.

Her task was by no means difficult. The poor sufferer made no resistance, but drank immediately what she offered him. She then opened wide the window, and burnt some aromatic herbs, to sweeten the air. The atmosphere became fresher, and less heavy, and when she had changed the pillow-case, she fancied her father seemed to rest his head with a sort of satisfaction on the fresh and spotless linen.

All the while keeping careful watch over the patient, she passed the night in cleansing the house, establishing currents of air throughout, and burning fumigating drugs. She selected a large, lofty room, to which it was her intention to have her father removed as soon as he could quit his own. She then set in order all that she had brought, and put fresh linen upon the bed she destined for her father, and in which she longed to see him installed.

It was in such occupations that she passed all that night and the following day, at the same time watching carefully over her patient, and ministering to all his wants. Her heart was too full to allow her to think of herself; a little wine and water sufficed to support her strength.

The watchman had come in the morning, taken away the key of the house, and had promised to return in the evening, at nine o'clock.

The patient had passed the day tranquilly. True he had given no sign of consciousness, but he had been calm, had taken all that Clara had offered him, and had dozed at frequent intervals.

Towards evening, while Clara was anxiously waiting for the clock to strike nine, to see again the good watchman, Mr. Falkland awoke, and called in a firmer voice than his daughter dared hope for:

"Martha!"

At this single word Clara started with emotion and hope, hastily let down her veil, approached the bed, and fearing lest that the sound of her voice should betray her, said in a very low tone:

"Here I am, sir!"

"Poor girl!" said Mr. Falkland, "I am very glad to see you; I was beginning to fear you had abandoned me like the others. But no, stay, I remember—yes, I was afraid you had fallen a

victim too; for you have been very ill also, have you not?"

"Yes, sir,—yes; but I am better now, though I have almost lost my voice, and I hope you will soon recover. How do you find yourself?"

"I give myself but little anxiety on the subject, Martha. What is life to me now? I have no longer any one to love and care for me—no one. Alas! no one. But Martha, what is the meaning of all this? The air of this room seems purer, fresher. I seem really to feel myself better. I seem to have a recollection of some one having given me refreshing draughts several times. Was it you, Martha? It could not have been my step-daughter? Oh, no! no! It was you, was it not?"

"Yes, sir," replied Clara, scarcely able to conceal her emotion.

"I feel, Martha, as if I could take something."

Clara gave him a little jelly and a glass of claret, and saw with delight that he ate and drank with pleasure. While he was partaking of this slight refreshment the invalid looked attentively at his nurse, and asked her why she had put on a veil?

"I have a weakness in my eyes," replied Clara; "and I cannot bear the light."

"You are like me, then; my sight is still very dim. I only see objects as through a fog."

"Were I to lose both sight and voice, sir, I

should still thank Heaven for having preserved my life."

"Truly, truly! I also will thank God for having been so merciful to us, although I must live without any tie to attach me to life, or any consolation to sweeten it. I have deprived myself of these tender ties, Martha; yes, I have deprived myself of them by my own fault. But I have something to say to you, Martha. Should I die, you must—but by-and-by, Martha, another time, for I feel exhausted." And almost as he was speaking he fell off to sleep.

A few moments after the church clock struck nine. Clara heard the street door open, and shortly after a gentle knock at the door of her father's room announced the visit of the worthy Simpson, as the watchman was named.

"Have you good news?" he asked as he entered; and the honest fellow seemed delighted at the reply.

"And your mother, how is she?" asked Clara in return.

"Very well, miss, perfectly well, at present; the Lord be praised! Whenever I go to see her I am careful to change every article of my clothing and linen. I have spoken to her of you. She admires you; she loves you; she prays for you with all her heart and soul."

As he finished speaking, Mr. Falkland turned restlessly in his bed, and Simpson withdrew.

"Martha," said Mr. Falkland, "whose voice was that I heard just now?"

"The watchman's, sir; a very honest, faithful man. As soon as you are well, he must be rewarded."

"Rewarded, my poor Martha! It will probably not be in my power to do it; but there is one who will reward him when she knows what he has done for me; she will reward you too, Martha."

"Of whom do you speak sir?"

"Of whom? Of my daughter. Do you not know that I have a daughter? Alas!"

He heaved a deep sigh, and sank again into a profound slumber.

He awoke at the end of about three hours, and Clara perceived by the tone of his voice that this last sleep had greatly recruited his strength.

"Martha," said he, "what was I saying to you when I fell asleep? Ah, I remember; I was telling you that my daughter would reward you. Yes, I am sure of it, although she has not written to me for a very long time. I am sure she still loves me, and that she will grieve sincerely when she learns I am no more; if it so please God."

At these words Clara could not restrain a convulsive sob. Mr. Falkland made a movement of surprise.

"Why, Martha," said he, "what is the matter?"

"You spoke of your death, sir; it was more than I could bear."

"Good Martha," said he, as if speaking to himself. "Is it not strange that this girl, who has only known me for so short a time, should take such an interest in me, and tend me so affectionately, whilst—but I must not think of that. By the way, Martha, I am thankful for your sake that you have had this malady, for no one ever has it twice, and consequently you do not run any danger with me. I congratulate myself now on having sent away my dear daughter Clara. I know her well; *she* would never have quitted me; and what would not have been my fears and anxieties on her account! But, thanks be to God! she is more than two hundred miles away from this. She does not know that her poor old father is in danger, and will only learn it, I hope, when I am recovered; or when there is nothing more to be done for me."

"You think then that she would come if she were aware you were in danger?"

"Do I think so? Ah! Martha, you would not ask that question if you knew my daughter."

How sweet were those words to the heart of Clara!

Mr. Falkland added—"If I have not received any letters from her it is no doubt because her enemies,

by whom I was beset, have suppressed them. Yes: I am fully convinced that she has written to me more than once."

"Oh yes, sir," exclaimed Clara, too deeply moved to be able to restrain her feelings; "she has written to you often, very often."

"How do you know that?"

"I judge so, sir, by what you have told me of her."

"Oh, yes, she is a dear, loving child; and how have I repaid her affection? Ah! blind that I was! Unhappy father!"

Clara, trembling lest the emotion that overpowered him might prove fatal, prevailed on him to take a composing draught, and not to talk any more then. He yielded to her entreaties, and soon after fell asleep.

IV.

Seeing her father perfectly calm and tranquil, Clara, who felt exhausted with fatigue and excitement, went into the room which she had prepared for him, lay down in her clothes on the couch, and snatched a few short moments of repose.

The patient passed a tolerably good night, though at times his sleep seemed disturbed.

The next morning he told her, whom he still took for Martha, that he wished to intrust her with a very important commission: "In the adjoining closet," said he, "you will find a rosewood casket, bound with steel. When I was taken ill, *she* dared not touch that, because it was well known that I had shown it to my lawyer, and that he had full particulars of its contents. It contains the family diamonds and other jewels, and a considerable sum in bonds and gold. All that belongs to my daughter. As soon as my eyes are closed, place this casket in the hands of Mr. Williams (that is the name of my lawyer), then set out for York, see my dear Clara, tell her I was happy that she was not here in the hour of peril; but that I regret having sent her from me; that I acknowledge her goodness; that I have always affectionately loved her; and that at my last hour I collected all my remaining strength to bless her."

This was too much for poor Clara. She melted into tears, mingled with sobs.

"Good girl! excellent girl!" exclaimed Mr. Falkland, "what a heart you have. Ah! Clara will love you, I am sure of it. She will make your future her care, and—— But let us cease this conversation, painful to us both."

During the day, Clara remarked with inexpressible happiness that her father's sight was becoming stronger, an evident sign of the return of his strength.

It would soon become very difficult to conceal from him who she was; and if he had not been still too weak to support a strong emotion, she would not have hesitated to declare herself; but another motive also restrained her. He would be uneasy on her account, on seeing her exposed to the danger of infection, and thus anxiety might perhaps retard his convalescence. She resolved, therefore, to continue to pass as Martha, so long as the thing was possible.

But as we shall see, she was not able to keep her secret much longer.

The church clock had just struck midnight, and Mr. Falkland was in a light sleep. Suddenly Clara thought she heard a noise in that part of the house that overlooked the garden. She listened attentively, and soon felt assured that some one was breaking into the house by the garden, the walls of which they had scaled.

A fearful idea took possession of her mind. It was doubtless one of those miscreants who came to plunder the dead. She heard steps in the passage, on the stairs. Motionless, breathless with alarm, what should she do? A thought suddenly occurred to her. She rushed to the closet, and seized the casket. She thought that by giving it up voluntarily, the ruffian might be induced to spare her father's life and her own.

At the same moment, the door of the chamber was

cautiously opened. The invalid awoke, saying: "Who is there?" and Clara appeared at the door of the closet. This door opened from within; it was very narrow, and covered with tapestry like the rest of the apartment. The room was only lit by the feeble light of the lantern which the housebreaker had brought with him. This unexpected apparition struck him with a superstitious terror. Seeing Clara suddenly appear with the casket under her arm, and a lamp in her hand, by a door which was only of sufficient height and breadth to allow her passage. On beholding her long white veil thrown back, and her pale features, he thought the wall had opened to give egress to the guardian spirit of the treasure he had come to steal. He rushed to the door, down the stairs, and fled like a flash of lightning.

Thus saved in an unhoped-for manner, but dreading the return of the man, Clara hastily replaced the casket in the closet. She was proceeding towards the window to call Simpson, when Mr. Falkland, by the light of the lamp which she held in her hand, and which was reflected full upon her face (for in her hurry and alarm she had forgotten to let down her veil), recognised her, and exclaimed.

"God of mercy! it is she! it is my daughter! Ah! my dear Clara," he added, extending his arms towards her. She would have rushed into them, but he suddenly repulsed her with a gesture of alarm,

crying, "No! no! no! Alas! my daughter, my embraces would be mortal to you."

At the same moment the street door was heard to open.

"Ah! Heaven be praised!" said Clara, "it is the watchman. He will protect us from another attack."

It was indeed Simpson. When he was informed of the fresh danger to which Clara had just been exposed, and of the almost miraculous manner in which she had escaped it, he congratulated her with the utmost warmth.

"Those fellows," said he, "are generally armed with daggers, and if they perceive that the patient still breathes, they finish him off, for fear of being recognised and denounced at some future time. But have no fear henceforth. That wretch, for certain, will not dare to return, though for greater safety we will securely fasten up the door that leads from the passage to the garden."

He called from the window to one of his comrades, who happened to be passing at the time, and who went to fetch the necessary tools, and between them, they securely barricaded the door.

"And further," said Simpson, fastening a tolerably loud bell to the window, "if you hear any noise, ring this bell. I shall not be far off, and will be with you in a moment."

Thus completely comforted and reassured on this

hand, and perceiving that the emotion caused by her presence had not been fatal to her father, and that his health was improving, Clara felt almost bowed beneath the weight of the accumulated bounties which Divine providence had showered upon her. The worthy Simpson and his comrade transported Mr. Falkland into the apartment which she had prepared for him.

They left in the room he quitted, everything that he had used up to that moment, and they entered it no more. They then fixed the bell to the window of the room which he had just taken possession of. Clara's joy was at its height, when she saw her dear patient placed in a good bed, furnished with sweet fresh linen, and he breathing a pure and wholesome air, and offering all the symptoms of a perfect convalescence. She could not find words to express her thanks to God, and it was only by silence and tears that she could testify her gratitude.

From that moment the days seemed to fly rapidly by; time seemed to have wings, and to be always too short for all that this tender daughter and happy father had to tell and ask of each other.

Every evening Simpson came to pay them a visit. He ascertained what they required, and was careful to bring it the next morning.

The tenth day the convalescence assumed the character of a complete cure. Clara, after having

given her father a draught, which he took every evening before going to sleep, threw herself upon a mattress, which she placed every night in his room on the floor, and then took a few hours' peaceful and refreshing slumber.

On the morrow, for the first time also for a long while, she awoke with a feeling of unmixed happiness. She had the double certainty that her father was saved, and that she had recovered all his affection.

This joy was, however, destined to be troubled. The numerous shocks that Mr. Falkland had had successively to undergo, had been too violent for the state of weakness to which he was reduced. He was attacked by another illness—a slow fever, which, though inspiring no fears for his life, retarded the moment when he could, without danger or inconvenience, be removed to his country mansion.

The time so ardently desired at length arrived. Through the instrumentality of honest Simpson, Clara obtained from a physician appointed by the government for that purpose, a certificate to the effect that Mr. Falkland, now completely cured, might leave London, and go wherever he pleased.

Before quitting that city, where the pestilence still continued to rage, Clara wished to go and see the mother of Simpson at her own house, and her father accompanied her, shut up in his warm and comfortable carriage, which was to convey him to his country

seat. They made a present to this worthy woman and her excellent son, of a sum sufficient to ensure them a modest competence for the remainder of their lives.

In a short time Mr. Falkland, thanks to the tender care of his daughter, regained his original health and strength, and lived many long and happy years.

His worthless step-daughter never again dared to present herself before her father-in-law; and indeed Mr. Falkland would not have received her; but at the entreaty of Clara, he settled an annuity upon her.

He had the happiness to wed Clara to a gentleman every way worthy of her. He was a man of rank and noble heart, and being justly proud of his wife's heroic and filial conduct, he had two portraits taken of her by one of the most celebrated painters of the time.

In one of these pictures, Clara is represented habited in mourning, with a white veil, and a small gold cross fastened round her neck, just as she appeared before her father's eyes, when, under the name of poor Martha, she had watched and tended him.

The other represents her at the door of her father's house, a dark lantern in her hand, imploring Simon to allow her to enter. In the distance appears the fatal cart carrying away the victims of the plague.

These two paintings, both of great merit, still adorn the mansion inhabited by the descendants of Clara. One of our friends, making the tour of England, having greatly admired these pictures, asked and obtained the explanation of them, and transmitted to us the simple and touching narrative which we have just communicated to our readers.

THE ABSENT BOY TO HIS MOTHER.

Thou know'st 'tis not love, when bright looks are around thee,
When music awakens her liveliest tone;
But thou knowest how truly, though pleasure hath bound thee
In chains of enchantment, my love is thine own?

Perhaps not when crowds are about thee in gladness
Thou dost to the absent and dear one incline;
But in the lone moments of silence and sadness
You turn with affection to this heart of mine.

Should grief pale thy cheek, or misfortune o'ertake thee,
How soon will the friends of bright hours fall away!
How quickly the flatterers of fashion forsake thee
For hearts that are buoyant and eyes that are gay!

What though I seem cold while their incense is burning—
In the depths of my soul dwells a holier flame,
Which steadily beams through the cold night of mourning,
Undimmed by disaster—for ever the same!

As the fond mother clings to her own little blossom,
The closer when blight hath affected its bloom—
So, mother, the dearer are you to my bosom,
The deeper thy sorrow, the darker thy gloom!

Victor.

Victor.

CHAPTER I.

One fine summer's day, Mr. Dulac, the proprietor of a pretty farm in the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau, having during a long walk lost his way, found himself in a sequestered valley, where a flock of sheep were grazing. The shepherd-boy who was keeping them was lying under a spreading beech-tree. As he made not the slightest movement, Mr. Dulac supposed him to be asleep, and advanced quietly to awaken him and ask his way. He approached, therefore, the sleeping shepherd-boy, and perceived that he held an open book in his hand. Curious to see the title of the book, he stooped down, and saw that it was a Latin author—Virgil. Extremely surprised, Mr. Dulac did not at once disturb the young lad: he leaned against a tree, and, while waiting for him to awaken, he silently regarded him.

He was a youth of about sixteen years of age. His clothes were coarse, but neat and clean in the extreme. His features were delicate, his hair soft and curly, his hands white. At this moment he

appeared agitated by a painful dream. His bosom heaved convulsively, and some inarticulate words escaped from his lips. In his broken slumber he made a violent start, which awoke him. He opened his eyes, and seeing Mr. Dulac standing opposite, and looking at him attentively, he rose immediately, touched his cap politely, and was about to withdraw, when Mr. Dulac stopped him.

"My boy," said he, benignantly, "I have just seen something beside you which has surprised me much—a Latin book. Do you understand Latin?"

"I have studied it, sir," modestly replied the boy.

"You have, then, received a very good education. How comes it that you are reduced to be a herdsman?"

The boy replied in a firmer, but equally modest tone:

"It may happen that an orphan well brought up may fall into poverty."

"But who are you, then; where do you come from; what is your name, your family, your country?"

"My name is Victor. I keep the sheep belonging to a neighbour, whose farm you can see by going to the top of this hill. I have nothing more to tell you."

"You will not, then," rejoined Mr. Dulac, "tell me who you are?"

"I do not know you, sir," replied Victor. "Why should I put confidence in you?"

This reply, though prompt and spirited, was so just, that Mr. Dulac did not take offence at it: on the contrary, it redoubled the interest that he took in the boy.

"I will not insist," said he. "Keep your secrets."

"Sir," said Victor, touched by his kindness, "if I have replied churlishly to your marks of interest, pray excuse me. I am a forsaken and unhappy lad, and I desire to remain unknown. I entreat you," he added, with tears in his eyes, "not to speak of me to any one."

Mr. Dulac was grieved. There was in the voice, in the accent, in the look of Victor something that bespoke sincerity, innocence, and candour. "Well," said he, "I will not speak of you to any one, and I will return and see you."

The lad had, in fact, inspired a real interest in his kind and benevolent heart, and the better to make his acquaintance, he often took a walk in the same direction. It seemed to this good man as if Providence had thrown in his way this hapless orphan, abandoned by all the world, and commanded him to befriend him.

Victor, on his part, without yet bestowing his confidence on Mr. Dulac, was still sensible of his kindness. He became accustomed to conversing with

him; and as this youth's mind was active and intelligent, and his understanding sound, Mr. Dulac took great delight in his conversation. He finally resolved to be of service to him, if possible, and to receive him into his house. But first he wished to make a few inquiries about him, and for that purpose he went to the farmer's house whose flocks were kept by Victor. The farmer was absent. The farmer's wife, however, saw Mr. Dulac, and replied to his questions. She was prodigal of her praises of Victor, but she had only known him for six months, and could tell nothing about him except what she had seen during this short space of time.

"Sir," said she, "the boy came one evening and knocked at our door. He only said, in a gentle, pleading tone, 'A crust of bread, if you please, and give me something to do in return.' We asked him several questions. 'I do not wish to tell a story,' said he: 'I prefer not answering you.' Our youngest boy was ill at the time, and we were in want of a shepherd. We took this young stranger into our service, and have had every reason to be satisfied with him, for he is careful, intelligent, and active. Our boy is nearly well, however, and we shall soon have no further positive need of Victor; but we can make him useful, so that he can stay with us as long as he pleases. While there is a loaf of bread in the house, there will always be a crust for him."

These simple words of the good farmer's wife increased the interest which Mr. Dulac already felt in Victor. "Who, then, is this boy?" he kept continually asking himself. "What adventures have brought him to these parts? Until I know something more, I will look after him.

"What are your projects?" he one day said to him. "You cannot be always keeping sheep."

"You are quite right, sir," replied Victor. "I wish I knew a trade that would enable me to continue to live in the country, and to gain my living by the labour of my hands. Oh! if I could only become a skilful gardener!"

"Well, then, will you come with me? I will treat you well and considerately. I have a small pleasure-farm. I have also a tolerably large garden, which I prefer to cultivate myself. It will be an amusement to me to teach you gardening. Come, what say you? We will work together all day, and in the evening you shall give my two children lessons in the Latin language. Their mother, to whom I have spoken of you, and who is delighted with this arrangement, will make no difference between you and them."

While Mr. Dulac spoke thus, Victor appeared deeply moved. A burning tear which fell from his eyes was at first his sole reply. He had not heart enough to speak: he took Mr. Dulac's hand, and

pressed it silently to his lips. Then, by degrees, he expressed his gratitude in the most energetic and faithful terms.

The very next day Victor, after having thanked and taken leave of the good farmer and his wife, was installed in the house of Mr. Dulac.

Mrs. Dulac was as amiable and good as her husband. She bestowed a motherly welcome on Victor, conducted him to a little room which was to be appropriated to his use, and introduced him to her two little boys, of the respective ages of seven and nine, who soon came to look upon Victor as their brother.

After dinner Mr. Dulac led Victor over his little estate, cultivated with the greatest care, in which there was not a single unproductive corner, and where the agreeable was everywhere combined with the useful.

This farm, besides the house and the garden, was composed of arable and meadow land; a vineyard, and a plantation of young trees laid out with the utmost art and skill, gave to the entire property the appearance of a large garden. There were poplar and ash trees on the lower parts of the estate, fruit-trees on the hills exposed to the southern sun, elm-trees on the rising ground, while the road leading to the house was through an avenue of fine full-grown chestnut-trees. In a large meadow was the drink-

ing-place for the cattle. It was in form of a little pond bordered with weeping willows. The stream that supplied it traversed a bed of osiers. The source from whence it flowed was ornamented with grottoes, in the interstices of which grew all sorts of creeping plants and wild flowers, among others the pretty house-leek, with its red blossoms, and the odoriferous saxifrage. In front of the house, separated from the meadow by an oak paling, extended a spacious court-yard, ornamented on the right and on the left by a double row of mulberry-trees. The centre part, or body of the house facing this paling, served as the habitation of the Dulac family. The two wings comprised the stables and the barns, and at the back of each was a yard for the poultry and other domestic animals. You entered the house by a vestibule, which, besides the door leading to the court, had another door, opening on to the flower-garden. This flower-garden was of small extent, but kept with extreme neatness. It was the particular object of Madame Dulac's care. Victor could not sufficiently admire its graceful borders of box, and the close velvet-like lawn, and the dazzling *parterres* containing flowers of every imaginable hue and variety.

From the flower-garden Mr. Dulac conducted him to a fine orchard thickly planted with flourishing fruit-trees, and from thence he led him to the

kitchen-garden by a winding path overshadowed by nut-trees, medlars, raspberry and gooseberry bushes. This kitchen-garden was surrounded on all sides by walls, and when Mr. Dulac opened the door leading into it, Victor was enchanted at the beautiful sight which presented itself.

In the centre of the garden was a basin continually full, which, by means of underground pipes, supplied with water a number of smaller basins symmetrically arranged through the whole extent of the kitchen garden, and by means of which it was watered.

The beds and borders were all filled with splendid vegetables; not a corner of the ground was suffered to remain untenanted, the whole presented an aspect of fertility, variety, and abundance.

Such was the peaceful and smiling abode into which Victor was admitted. He received nothing but the kindest treatment there; he had nothing but excellent examples before his eyes. The days were occupied in labour, the evenings in study. The children, whom Victor instructed with infinite pains and patience, made rapid progress, and their mother was pleased and grateful with Victor's kindness, industry, and politeness.

Aided by his pupil, Mr. Dulac cultivated his garden, which no one was allowed to touch but themselves.

They both still found time in the course of their

day, otherwise so fully occupied, to read together some instructive and entertaining book, besides which Victor helped Mrs. Dulac in the care of her flower garden, and thus spared her all the laborious part of that task.

Victor was the only one of the family whose happiness was not perfect. His nights were restless and disturbed, and it was often easy to see of a morning by his red eyes that he had been weeping.

He would often, too, during the daytime fall into a profound reverie; he would stand motionless leaning on his spade; and it seemed at such times as if visions, invisible to others, were passing before his eyes, which were wet with tears.

Whether he was thinking of his past history and struggles or not no one knew.

But a word from Mr. Dulac sufficed to rouse him from this languid state, and he would immediately set to work again with renewed ardour.

At length, at the end of six months, he resolved to confide all his secrets to his benefactor.

One evening when all the family had retired early to rest, with the exception of himself and Mr Dulac, Victor related to that gentleman the following story of his faults and misfortunes.

II.

The indocility and stubbornness of my character, which I acknowledge, and which I now deplore, but too late, have been the cause of all my troubles. I have behaved very badly towards my father. . . . Pardon my not telling you his name, it is his secret and not mine, that I believe it my duty to conceal from you. I would not reduce you to the sad alternative of either giving me up to him, or of keeping me here against his will.

My father is a gentleman distinguished for the services he has rendered to his country. I am the sole fruit of his first marriage. My mother died shortly after my birth. Alas! I never knew her.

After three years of widowhood my father married again. At first my stepmother was kind and considerate towards me, but at the end of two years she had a child of her own, and I fancied I perceived that she took a dislike to me because I did not show fondness enough for my young brother.

By proving myself affectionate and docile I should doubtless have easily overcome her prejudices, for I must confess that she is naturally kind-hearted, and as for myself, at the bottom of my heart I loved my little brother Arthur; but I thought myself neglected, I became sulky and jealous, and behaved

coldly and unkindly to my little brother. It was then that my stepmother, regarding me as her son's enemy, ceased to love me. My father, seeing how bitter I was against my brother, grew angry and displeased with me also. He was right and I was wrong. Alas! I see it too plainly now.

My disposition was becoming gloomy and morose: melancholy, mistrust, a sort of savage suspicion and defiance was rendering me troublesome to every one. My stepmother complained that I did not even respect her, that I was jealous of her son. She wept as she related to my father the proofs of my aversion and my jealousy, and my father overwhelmed me with his just reprimands.

At length I grew to imagine that my stepmother hated me, and that my father also had ceased to love me. Losing thus all hope, I fell into a state of despondency and would not apply myself to anything.

Then my father treated me with more rigour than ever, and I seemed to become an object of dislike to every one in the house.

If I had known how to be patient and tractable; if I had worked diligently; if I had shown as much affection for Arthur as he did for me; if I had sought, by an obliging disposition, to regain the affection of my father and stepmother, I should have succeeded no doubt. How many troubles should I not have avoided! but I did not know how; I did not even

wish to conquer myself, and God has punished me for it.

Sometimes my old nurse used to come and see me. I would then throw myself into her arms with mad ardour and shed torrents of tears. "Ah!" I used to say to her, "you are the only friend I have in the word. I have no mother, and my father hates me."

My nurse, trembling at my emotion, would answer me, "Victor, Victor, do not speak so; it is wicked. Be gentle, patient, and good; merit your father's affection and he will bestow it on you."

She was right, but I refused to believe it, and hardened my heart more and more.

My stepmother, seeing that I always behaved worse after my nurse's visits, at length forbade her coming to see me any more.

When I knew that (I was then in my twelfth year) I ran, or rather rushed, into the drawing-room, where my stepmother was sitting alone.

"Ah! madam," I exclaimed, "this is too much! to deprive me of seeing the only person who cares for me in the world is really barbarous."

And, as she listened to me with a cold and severe air, I added, "You are, and always have been, ever since you came into our house, my enemy; I will not live in the same house with you. You had better get my father to send me away; it will not

cost him much to do it, for he does not seem to care for any one but you."

Passion choked my utterance, I dashed out of the drawing-room and went and threw myself upon my bed in convulsions of anger.

The next day my father sent for me into his study. I was conscious of my bad behaviour, and felt dreadfully alarmed on being summoned into his presence. His stern look made me cast down my eyes, and I seemed to feel the agonies of death on hearing him address me in the following terms, which my passionate temper and imprudence, alas! had but too well merited.

"You have accused your stepmother of barbarity; you have called her your enemy; you have said that I, your father, did not love you; you have requested to leave the house. Do you still desire to do so?"

Conscience-stricken, and confused, I had not courage to utter a word. My father continued: "Your wish shall be gratified, you shall go to boarding-school. The day after to-morrow you will depart."

And he made me a sign to quit the room. I obeyed. The idea of leaving my father, whom I loved more tenderly than ever, caused my tears to flow afresh, but I concealed my grief, and to my companions and our people affected a stubborn and careless demeanour. I heard that I was going to be

sent a considerable distance from home to a school which was kept in an old house situated in the centre of a wood, by an ex-professor of the University. He was, they said, a learned and severe man, skilled in the art of bending the most stubborn dispositions. I made neither comment nor remonstrance, and when the moment for my departure was arrived I presented myself before my father to bid him adieu.

He was alone in his study. He looked at me kindly. I entered with a resigned and tranquil air, swallowing my grief as best I could. I felt as if his look pierced my heart.

"Go, my dear son," said he, "learn to conquer yourself; and when you have done this, and know how to behave towards your parents with love, respect, and politeness, I will allow you to return. Embrace me. Farewell."

At these words my heart felt as if it would break. In the excess of my emotion, instead of throwing myself into my father's arms, I fell at his feet and seized his hand, to which I glued my burning lips. Tears and sobs choked my voice.

"Victor, Victor!" exclaimed my father, "you are not, then, insensible?"

"Insensible! I—I——," I exclaimed, in broken accents.

"Well, well!" he replied, "if you have a good

heart, if you love your father, promise him to subdue your passionate temper."

At this moment the study door opened, and my stepmother entered with her son.

I shuddered at the sight of her.

"Victor," said my father, "rise" (for I was still at his feet), "kiss the hand of your second mother, ask her pardon, and bid her farewell."

I rose quickly, but I did not obey. I was wrong, I confess, but my whole soul revolted at the request: my tears ceased, and a look of hatred was the only farewell my stepmother obtained from me.

"Go and embrace Victor," said my father to his younger son. Arthur ran towards me. I turned aside from him; my exasperation had rendered me disobedient and unjust. Then, falling again at my father's feet, and shedding a torrent of tears:

"Father," said I, "I love you; I respect you; I am ready to obey you in everything: but do not force me to ask pardon of a person who detests me; do not oblige me to embrace a child who has taken my place in your heart."

"Rise, unnatural son," said he, angrily, "and begone!"

And as I was retiring, half suffocated by my sobs, I heard him say, "Let him go! let him quit my sight, and never let me see him more!"

After this cruel scene, a confidential servant set

out with me in a post-chaise, and conducted me to the school.

The two first years of my stay at the school were a veritable penance. What redoubled my grief and mortification was that I never received from my father a single line—a single mark of affection. My stepmother wrote very regularly to my master, and begged him to inform me that all the family were well. But my father, to whom I often addressed the most tender and affectionate letters, never replied to me. It is true that, in my letters, I never spoke either of my stepmother, or of my brother, and that I testified no regret at my conduct towards them. This, no doubt, increased the displeasure of my father. His silence overwhelmed me with grief.

My master, though inflexibly severe, was reasonable and just. "Victor," said he to me one day, "how can you expect your father to show you marks of his affection, before you, yourself, have given him proofs of your repentance? What have you done during the two years you have been here? Have you worked with courage and industry? Have you endeavoured to repair your former faults, by irreproachable conduct, by constant and steady progress? Make but a strong effort to obtain a victory over yourself, and your father will pardon you."

"I was dazzled by the hope which my master flashed before my eyes. I triumphed over the indif-

ference which had seized upon me. Soon my master lavished praise and encouragement upon me; still, though I wrote regularly, no reply ever reached me from my father. My heart beat with impatience. Every time that the postman appeared at the old house, I flew towards him, and questioned him with eager looks. "Nothing for you," was always his cold reply, and I shrank back again within myself. If, in my letters, I had spoken of my stepmother, of my brother; if I had shown any affection for them, my father would, most certainly, have replied to me. I understand it now; but at that time it never occurred to me.

Already had the third year gone by, and not a word of reply on the part of my father. I then relapsed into my former melancholy; I could not any longer bend my mind to study. During the hours of recreation I shunned my comrades. I used to go and plunge into the thickest part of the forest: and if any of them came and questioned me, "I am ill," I would reply. "Where is your pain?" "Here," was my answer, laying my hand on my heart.

I spoke truly: I was sick at heart. A thousand gloomy thoughts chased each other through my mind. I hated study; I hated the school; I hated even my comrades, who were so kind and sympathising; and even, in my ingratitude, I grew to hate my master, who was really very kind to me, and who seemed to

feel my griefs and troubles as keenly as myself. I resolved to make one last attempt, and to write once more to my father, and if I received no reply, to renounce everything and to fly. Imprudent and guilty resolution! I must indeed have been mad!

After having despatched this last letter, I awaited the reply with feverish anxiety, day after day. No reply came.

It was then that I put into execution the absurd design I had formed. I ran away from the school. When I went, I left a letter for the master, thanking him for his great kindness, and begging him not to search after me.

At some distance from the school, I made an exchange of my clothes for those of a young peasant. I only travelled at night time, and by unfrequented paths, avoiding the villages: I was seeking for some farm in a solitary place, where they might be in need of a shepherd. I found at length what I sought in a farm, situated at a little distance from this house.

In that asylum where I was treated with kindness, I might have been tranquil enough; but I always pictured to myself that my master and relations were seeking for me, and that if they should succeed, they would treat me with the utmost cruelty.

At the expiration of some months, this uneasiness ceased, and I felt abandoned. It was then that my

melancholy, which the silence of the plains where I wandered with my flocks served to increase, became settled. When I thought of my father, and when I said to myself, *I shall never see him more*, I was very nearly falling into a state of despair. One thing only contributed to lighten my troubles, and that was, my having brought away with me some books; among others a Virgil. I have spent many pleasant hours with Virgil, and I have felt in him the sympathy and kindness of a true friend.

Victor's voice, more than once during this confession faltered; as for Mr. Dulac, he was deeply pained by the recital. He, however, made no unnecessary reproaches to the lad, who repented so bitterly of his stubbornness and disobedience; but he made a firm promise to himself, to leave nothing undone to discover his family, and restore him to the favour of his father.

III.

A YEAR had passed since the arrival of Victor in Mr. Dulac's house. Two years more flew by, during which he became an intelligent and useful gardener. At the same time he had radically cured himself of all his faults. Misfortune, good example, the habits of a tranquil, and at the same time laborious, life, had

all combined to calm the violence of his passions; and Victor was now as gentle and patient as he had ever been generous and courageous. But shame and sorrow for his past faults, prevented him from yielding to the pressing advice of Mr. Dulac, to return to his family.

One day, Mr. Dulac, walking with him in the garden, said to him:

"I shall be absent for two or three days; I have just heard that a gentleman who formerly rendered me important services, and whom I have lost sight of for the last twenty years, has come to settle a few miles from here. Grief and misfortune, it is said, have impaired his health. He has lived for the last year in a solitary country house, and has led so secluded a life, that it was only yesterday I heard of his being in this part of the country. Gratitude calls me to his side. I leave to you, Victor, the care of our garden during the time my visit to Mr. Percival will last."

At the mention of the name of Mr. Percival, Victor turned deadly pale; he tottered, and would have fallen, if he had not leaned for support against a tree; then in broken accents he exclaimed:

"Mr. Percival, did you say?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Dulac. "What means your emotion—your alarm at the mention of this name? Is it possible that you know him? Can he be a relation—a friend of your father?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Victor, bursting into tears, "it is he—it is my father himself . . . . and grief, you say, has broken down his health! This grief, unhappy that I am, has been caused by me! Alas! ungrateful and unnatural son that I am, this is all the result of my disobedience. Oh! Mr. Dulac, I pray you take me with you; ask him to pardon me; tell him—But no: he has a horror of me, no doubt; he would repulse me; he would drive me from him overwhelmed with reproaches; reproaches which I have, alas! but too well deserved. Or perhaps he believes me dead, and what would be his surprise and agitation on suddenly seeing the son who has disgraced him, rise as from the grave to add to his troubles!"

A prey to these heartrending reflections, Victor abandoned himself unrestrainedly to his grief. It was long before Mr. Dulac, by his kind and just reasoning, succeeded in somewhat calming his agitated heart.

"Do not think, Victor," said he, "that you can be an object of horror and aversion to your father, or that if he has mourned you dead, he will regret your return to life. No. Your faults have been grave, but there is in the heart of a father an inexhaustible fountain of love. You are no longer that Victor of former times—headstrong, stubborn, jealous, and disobedient: misfortune has changed you; and God, accepting your true repentance for your past errors,

has, doubtless, happier days in store for you. I am going to see your father. During the two days over which my absence will extend, reflect well on your position, meditate, interrogate your heart, pray to God to enlighten you and to come to your aid; and on my return we will concert together as to the right path to pursue. Farewell! my poor boy!" he added, pressing Victor to his heart. Have confidence in the goodness of your Heavenly Father, and in the affection of your parents!"

Mr. Dulac set out on his journey. After having followed for several hours a solitary road in the midst of woods, he entered a magnificent avenue bordered by tall plane-trees, leading by a gentle ascent to a green and verdant lawn, forming the foreground to a handsome country seat. This was the habitation of Mr. Percival.

The grounds which surrounded this dwelling were as smiling as they were picturesque. The immense sweep of lawn was variegated by clumps of flowering shrubs, standard roses, and brilliant-hued flowers, disposed with great taste and art. Without paling, or enclosure, this dazzling *parterre* seemed to blend with the landscape, which extended as far as the eye could reach, and presented on all sides an enchanting aspect. An avenue of magnolias, and of enormous orange-trees, laden with fruit yellow as gold, and flowers white as snow, filled the air with their pungent

perfumes. From the portico was visible the course of the silvery Seine, empurpled by the rays of the setting sun, the green hills of the opposite shore, and, still further in the distance, the beautiful blue mountains blending their lofty summits with the azure of the sky.

Mr. Dulac, after having, for some time feasted his eyes on this delightful prospect, knocked at the door of the house. An old grey-haired domestic ushered him into a drawing-room, where he begged him to await the arrival of his master.

"Mr. Percival must be truly happy in so charming a retreat," Mr. Dulac could not help observing to the old man.

"Alas! no," the faithful servitor replied, with a mournful air. "My master is always sad and melancholy. Physicians have ordered him to take continual exercise; he cultivates this garden with his own hands with constant care, and yet, even the sight of all these beautiful flowers never brings a smile to his lips."

Mr. Percival entered. He appeared pleased at seeing again Mr. Dulac, for whom he entertained the most sincere esteem. During the conversation he suffered it to be easily perceived that he had endured heavy affliction, but without explaining on what account. Mr. Dulac judged it both advisable and prudent, in this first interview, to say nothing at all on the subject of Victor.

"The physicians," said Mr. Percival, "have prescribed for me country air; I have been living here about a year now. My wife remains in Paris, to superintend the education of my son Arthur, and comes to see me occasionally. But my friend," he continued, "you can render me a service. I am in want of a gardener to assist me in my labours. I want an intelligent and steady young man. Several have applied to me, but in this part of the country, where I know no one, my confidence may easily be abused. I would rather take one from your recommendation, as you are well known about here."

"I will look out," replied Mr. Dulac, "and in the course of a few days I hope to find a young man such as you require."

After having passed a whole day with his old friend, Mr. Dulac returned to the farm, where Victor was impatiently awaiting him.

He listened in breathless anxiety while Mr. Dulac gave an account of his visit, not omitting the most trifling details. He turned pale and red by turns; broken sobs and heavy sighs bore witness to the intensity of his emotions. But when he learnt that his father was in need of a young man to assist him in the cultivation of his gardens, he started to his feet, and exclaimed:

"The young man whom my father requires is found: it is myself."

"You!" exclaimed Mr. Dulac. "What is your idea, then?"

"Yes, myself," continued Victor, scarcely heeding the interruption. "During the seven years that he has not seen me, my complexion, my features, the very colour of my hair has changed. Never, under the disguise of a gardener, will he be able to recognise his son. . . . . And after all! after having behaved so badly, ought I to go and ask pardon before I have proved that I deserve it, before I have given security for my future good conduct, and a pledge of my sincere repentance? I should, perhaps, be pardoned, but as a criminal who is still mistrusted. No, I will live some time with my father—I will serve him without being known who I am, and thus strive to regain his heart before imploring his pardon. I will be obedient and respectful towards my stepmother; and as for my young brother—I will love him. Oh! I will love him so, that his mother, in spite of herself, will be obliged to love me . . . . and when, by dint of industry, docility, and good conduct, I have gained the esteem of every one, then, and then only, will I throw myself at my father's feet, and say to him: 'I am Victor; your son Victor! Pardon, dear father.'"

This project, which at first sight seemed somewhat romantic to Mr. Dulac, appeared to him, upon further reflection, reasonable and generous. He felt

that this life of labour and dependence in his father's house would be for the disobedient young boy well pleasing in the sight of God, and honourable in the eyes of man. He acknowledged that Mr. Percival's happiness would be based on a much surer foundation if, before having recognised and pardoned his son, he had acquired the certainty of his good qualities. He wrote therefore to Mr. Percival that he could recommend him a young gardener, to whose character he could bear ample testimony. A few days after the despatch of this letter, Victor prepared for his departure. After having bid a most tender and affectionate farewell to Mrs. Dulac and her amiable children, Victor set out for his new abode.

At sight of the dwelling inhabited by a father whom he had so cruelly offended, he felt his heart fail him, and was on the point of retracing his steps. Again and again, he placed his hand on the handle of the bell without having the courage to pull it. Regaining the mastery over himself, he at length rang at the gate; it was opened.

"I am," said he, "the gardener, sent by Mr. Dulac to Mr. Percival."

"Welcome, young man," said the old servant, surveying him with looks of interest, "master has told me about you; come in, come in!"

Victor had instantly recognised him; but the good old man was far from suspecting that that was

the child whom he had so often carried in his arms, and whom he had, seven years before, conducted to school. He presented Victor to Mr. Percival, who, spade in hand, was gardening.

At sight of his father with features changed and hair hoary with age and sorrow, Victor's face blanched with self-reproach; his heart beat fast; his knees trembled under him; his eyes stared wildly, and it was with difficulty he restrained his trembling lips from betraying his secret. By a violent effort he subdued his feelings, and awaited the questions that should be put to him.

Mr. Percival regarded with visible agitation this young man, whose extreme emotion he imputed to the timidity natural to his age. Not that he, with his weakened vision, entertained the slightest recollection of him, but he fancied he could trace in this unknown youth, a vague resemblance to Victor, and at this thought, a tear moistened his eyelids.

It was thus, that both, equally moved, kept silence for some time. This delay gave Victor time to recover his self-possession.

"Oh! it is you," said Mr. Percival, at length, "whom Mr. Dulac has kindly sent to me?"

"Yes, sir."

The sound of his voice caused Mr. Percival to start.

"What means this weakness?" said he to himself. "Can I not see, can I not hear the voice of a youth

of that age, without it reminding me of my son? And that touching voice, that pleasing exterior, that gentle and modest bearing—ah! Victor! so violent, so headstrong, so stubborn; alas! this poor youth does not much resemble Victor; it is a silly fancy." Then addressing the young man: "What is your name?" said he.

"Eugene." (He spoke the truth; he was christened Victor Eugene.)

"Where does your father live?"

"A few miles from Mr. Dulac's farm."

"What does he do?"

"He cultivates a garden, sir."

"Have you a mother living, young man?"

"I have lost her."

"What is your age?"

"Nineteen, sir."

"Ah! that would be just his age, thought Mr. Percival, half-aloud;" and no longer able to control the violence of his emotions, Mr. Percival turned into one of the shadiest and most secluded walks in his garden, and spoke no more to Victor for the rest of the day. He ordered his old servant to install the young man in a little cottage close to the house; a female servant was instructed to prepare his meals and provide for his simple wants, and that very evening he entered upon his duties.

Absorbed in a profound melancholy which he

could not throw off, Mr. Percival spoke but little to his young gardener, whose features and voice awoke in him the most painful recollections: but still, while engaged in his own work, he would quit it from time to time to go and inspect Victor's, to whom he often expressed his entire satisfaction. Besides this, he made frequent inquiries about him, and all that he heard of his conduct, of his disposition, of his assiduity, and his industry, delighted him. Often, in passing him, he would smile and give him a nod of approbation, and daily he grew more and more attracted to him.

Victor perceived with real delight that he was making steady and sure progress in the esteem and affection of his father. He saw, in imagination, the day approach when he could at length reveal his secret. The frequent letters of Mr. Dulac animated his courage and sustained his hope.

The time flew rapidly by, and the decisive moment was fast approaching. The holidays were about to begin, and Mrs. Percival was expected home with her son.

Victor, in sounding the depths of his own heart, found there no trace of the passions which had formerly rendered him so unhappy: hatred, mistrust, ill-temper, jealousy, all had disappeared; he now only aspired to show himself a pious and obedient son, a generous and affectionate brother; and as for

the antipathy of his stepmother (if it still existed), his firm intention was to leave nothing undone to conquer it; or even if he did not succeed in doing that, at any rate to endeavour to bear it without anger or complaint.

At length Mrs. Percival arrived with Arthur. The sight of his stepmother produced in Victor a feeling of regard, mingled with respect and regret; but at sight of his brother, his heart was filled with joy. He was a frank and open-hearted schoolboy of fourteen, fresh from his college, where he had just completed his third term. Impatient to have a pretext for obtaining a nearer view of him, Victor ran into the garden, gathered a bouquet, and approaching Mrs. Percival, he bowed respectfully and presented her with it. Mrs. Percival accepted the flowers, and while thanking him, regarded the young man with some surprise.

"My dear," said she aside to her husband, "your new gardener seems a very superior sort of person."

Victor, embarrassed by her looks and the remark which he overheard, hastily withdrew. Arthur ran after him with the gaiety of boyhood; he talked with the brother whom he did not recognise, and found the greatest pleasure in his conversation. In a short time he began to take delight in helping him at his work, and in receiving some practical horticultural lessons. This intimacy increased every day. Arthur

was not happy unless Victor passed his evenings with him and joined in his pleasures and sports. In this quiet spot, removed from all society, Mrs. Percival saw with pleasure her son find an innocent diversion in the society and companionship of a young man at once estimable and well brought up.

Victor became more and more beloved by every member of the family.

One day Arthur said to him, "Eugene, have you a brother?"

"Yes."

"And you love him much, no doubt?"

"I love him with all my heart," replied Victor, affectionately regarding him. "And you, have you a brother?"

At this question, a cloud passed over the boy's face, and he replied with a serious air:

"I had one once; he is dead, they say, and there is not a day that I do not regret him. I should have loved him so!"

As he said this, he drew his hand across his eyes, to dash away the tears that sprang up.

"What a kind and generous fellow!" said Victor to himself; "and this is the brother of whom I was jealous—the brother whom I persisted in hating!"

"Eugene," said Arthur, "it is painful to be separated from those we love. I will ask my papa to send for your brother and your father."

"What! do you think your father would allow it?"

"Oh, I think so, for he is very partial to you, and he always seems pleased if any one speaks favourably of you."

The day following this conversation, Mr. Dulac came on a visit to the house.

"You are arrived just in time," said Mr. Percival. "I was on the point of writing to you respecting the family of your young protégé. I want to have some information about them. I cannot sufficiently thank you for your trouble and recommendation. Every one here loves and esteems Eugene. You know the father of this young man?"

"I both know and respect him; he is virtue, probity, and honour itself."

"Is he capable of superintending the cultivation of extensive grounds?"

"Well, I can answer for him as far as intelligence, activity, and skill are concerned."

"He has, I hear, a younger son?"

"In every respect worthy of the elder."

"Shall I confess to you my friend at once? It seems as if Eugene had become indispensable to me, and to my son Arthur also. At first, I could not bear the presence of that young man; the sight of him did me harm. There is something in his features, in the tones of his voice, that

reminds me of the child I have lost. You know—Victor."

"Yes, yes; I have heard something about him; a son who behaved very badly towards you, I believe, and caused you great grief."

"He has made my life miserable, it is but too true. But still, my friend, I would even justify him somewhat in your opinion. He is not thoroughly bad, as, no doubt, you have been told. The fault was not all on his side. His stepmother—must I confess it?—his stepmother, who is, nevertheless, all goodness and generosity, did not like him. She fancied she had observed that Victor disliked her child. The uncontrolled violence of temper of my unhappy boy but tended too much to confirm her in that opinion. This idea rendered her unjust towards him. She always imagined that if Victor were restored to my favour, Arthur would be the sufferer. She went so far—must I own it?—as to suppress some of the letters which Victor wrote to me from school; so much had her maternal fears perverted her sense of justice and right. And I—well, I looked upon Victor, who wrote but seldom, and who, in his letters, never spoke of either his stepmother or his brother, as an unnatural child. But, my friend, two years ago, the hand of God weighed heavily upon my wife, and upon me also. Arthur fell dangerously ill. His life for some time hung upon

a thread. Distracted with grief, his mother beheld in this sore affliction a chastisement of Heaven; and her eyes, too long blinded by prejudice, were suddenly opened. She confessed all to me, and made a promise, whether God should spare Arthur or not, to repair all the wrongs she had done to Victor. God, in his mercy, did spare the life of our Arthur. But what has become of my firstborn?—of my unhappy Victor, whose stubbornness and disobedience has caused so much misery? I have sought for him in vain. I hope he still lives; but alas! he leads, no doubt, a life of poverty and suffering. Perhaps even—and I tremble whenever I think of it—he has suffered himself to be led into vice and guilt. Who knows whether, after having so bitterly bewailed his flight, I might not have cause to regret his return! If he is no more, that portion of the inheritance which belongs to him shall be appropriated to the poor; such is the wish of Arthur and his mother; it is also mine."

In relating these painful family secrets to Mr. Dulac, Mr. Percival had relieved his overcharged heart. Mr. Dulac did not think it desirable to repeat this conversation to Victor; for any secrets confided by a friend are sacred and inviolate; but he told him he had every reason to be full of hope, and advised him to seize the first favourable occasion that presented itself for making himself known.

IV.

The very next day this opportunity offered itself.

Mr. Percival, having sent for the young man into his study, addressed him as follows:

"I think you are attached to me, Eugene; my son loves, and my wife is pleased with you. It would be agreeable to have you settled near me, and to see you at the same time reunited to your father and your brother. Does this plan suit you?"

"Oh, sir, it is my most ardent wish."

"Very well, then, I will find work for you all upon my estate upon advantageous terms; and I intend also to charge myself with your future interests so long as you remain faithful. Write to your father, and communicate to him my wishes and intentions."

Victor turned pale; the blood rushed to his heart which beat violently; the crisis, at once so dreaded and so desired, was then at hand.

"Sir," said he, in a faltering voice, "would you be good enough to write to him yourself, and in your letter say that you are satisfied with me?"

"Certainly; I will write with pleasure, and I can truly tell him that I am perfectly satisfied with you in every respect, and that we all esteem you as much

as if you were one of the family. He seated himself at his secretary, and took his pen.

"Oh, sir! I beseech you, one moment. You see me trembling at the confession I am about to make. It is not enough that you write to my father to express to him your satisfaction with my conduct, and ask him to join his son; it is first *my pardon; yes, my pardon,* that you must obtain from him."

"Your pardon!" replied Mr. Percival, astonished, and pushing back his chair. "Can you be guilty? and of what?"

"Oh, yes, sir; very guilty. In my childhood, I caused the most bitter sorrow to my dear father; my unconquerable violence, my stubborn disobedience—finally, my flight——"

The father listened, with eyes distended, and his hand pressed to his throbbing heart. His agitation increased at every word which his son uttered. He fixed his eager looks upon him. His whole soul was absorbed in this revelation.

Victor continued his pleading in a voice broken by sobs:

"Ask pardon for one who is truly guilty, but deeply repents. Your pardon! your forgiveness, dear father," he continued, throwing himself at his feet.

"It is—it is Victor! my long lost son! my boy, it is you!" cried the now happy father, raising him, pressing him to his heart, and bathing him in tears.

"I have found my son! I have regained him—good, industrious, docile."

Such happiness seemed almost too much for both. Neither father nor son could speak; but by sighs, tears, and tender caresses, their joy found a vent. Attracted by the noise, Mrs. Percival was not long before she joined them. She had guessed the truth. Victor ran to her, and kissed her hand; she presses him in her arms, and calls him her son. She ran to fetch Arthur, who came bounding into the study, and threw himself on Victor's neck, who loaded him with caresses, saying, as he did so:

"You see, I did not speak falsely when I told you that I loved my brother with all my heart."

From that time, peace and happiness reigned in this family, and their existence was as calm and serene as a cloudless day. They all loved each other tenderly, and gave constant proofs of their affection. Mrs. Percival made no distinction between Victor and Arthur, and they all three united their efforts to render Mr. Percival happy.

His health re-established, and his strength re-invigorated by these happy events, Mr. Percival was again able to consecrate his talents to the service of his country.

As for Victor, his father made him a present of the estate and country seat where their reconciliation had taken place. Victor resides there almost con-

tinually, and is known as the benefactor of all the country round. There is no more welcome guest there than Mr. Dulac, whom all the family regard, not only as the old and tried friend of the father, but also as the guardian of the wandering son—his tutor, his guide, his friend.

Victor became an honoured and respected man; and among the numerous institutions which he founded was a handsome school. One of his greatest pleasures was to visit it often, to question the children, to give them useful advice, and to reward them for their good conduct; further, he never ceased to repeat to them this precept, too well confirmed by the memory of his own faults and misfortunes:

"*Love your parents: honour them, obey them in all and everything. It is the law of God, the foundation of all virtue, the source of all morality and happiness.*"

Emma:

A TALE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OF 1793.

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A TALE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OF 1793.

CHAPTER I.

The story which I am going to relate to you will be very short; it is the history of a moment. But such a moment of wondrous energy is worth ten years of false heroism.

It was in 1793, at Avignon, in France. An immense crowd had assembled to witness the execution of two persons, whom the revolutionary tribunal had just condemned, among a crowd of others. In the middle of the square rose the guillotine; in front of this strutted, with horrible glee, the minister of this festival, the executioner.

This man was hideous to behold. Even his fearful trade inspired still less disgust than his brutishly cruel exterior, and his fiendlike joy. He smiled as he regarded the preparations for the punishment. By his manner he seemed to say to the spectators, "I am happy to see you, and to display my dexterity." Never had there been any scene more revolting and

more ignoble than this, even amongst the many that had sullied that period.

No one knew this man's origin; the most sinister reports were current about him. Those functions, which hitherto no one had exercised but by constraint, he had solicited as a favour. There had even been some hesitation about granting his request, so strong was the disgust and aversion inspired by his vicious and atrocious countenance. You may judge by this what sort of a man he was: it was considered doing him an honour to appoint him public executioner.

However, he is on his scaffold, toying with his instruments of death.

Meanwhile, the victims were approaching.

Their route was lined by a double file of citizen soldiers, and behind them was the people—the sovereign people.

Floating above the crowd, a roaring sound rose on the air. There were imprecations, cries of rage, shouts, and, mingled with all, the horrid revolutionary song, "*Ça ira*," yelled in chorus by thousands of harsh voices. The fierce din rolled through the air like a whirlwind, freezing some hearts with fear, and redoubling in others the ardour of political fury.

But, singular to relate! by degrees, as the two victims approached, the uproar grew less, and still less as they appeared in sight; and when they reached the fatal spot it ceased entirely. They had no sooner

indeed arrived at the place of execution, than the crowd, who were just swayed and agitated by passions turbulent and violent, seemed panic-stricken, so profound was the silence that reigned in the streets, the squares, and at the open windows. More ominous than the tumult that had preceded it, this silence struck a chill to the heart.

It arose from the circumstance that the two new victims were singularly interesting and beautiful.

They were Emma and her mother.

The mother was still in the full zenith of her beauty, a beauty that borrowed a fresh charm from her grief. For, occupied solely with her daughter, bewailing the fate of Emma, and thinking nothing of her own, she seemed unconscious that these terrible preparations could be also for herself.

This mother, so interesting to the eyes of humanity, might perhaps be guilty in political eyes. Even while commiserating her, it was possible to comprehend her condemnation. But Emma! before what tribunal could she be pronounced criminal? What fault could she have committed against her country at an age at which we can only offend our God or our parents, and when to both her God and her parents she had as yet been only an object of blessing and love. A girl of sixteen, endowed with exquisite beauty, and angelic sweetness of character.

It was easy to discern in one of the two victims

the maternal character, dignified and adorned with all that is most noble in human nature; but mingled, at the same time, with something haughty and scornful. The mother had not effaced the feudal dame, the friend of emigration, the proud and contemptuous enemy which the Republic had dreaded and had proscribed.

In the other, the filial sentiment alone was visible: it shone pure and unmixed; and at this fatal moment it looked so lovely and attractive, that the most abandoned of their own sex, at sight of that interesting girl, stared with admiration and pity combined.

Emma, usually so timid, found energy enough at this crisis, to console her mother. It was easy to be seen that she trembled lest her mother should inwardly accuse herself of having involved her in her ruin; and to relieve her from this dread, she seemed to glory in the death she was about to suffer.

The mother, in spite of herself, betrayed her weakness, but it was for her daughter. The daughter displayed her courage, but it was for her mother.

The spectators were deeply touched at this sight. So much youth—this filial love and virtue; so much beauty and maternal solicitude, made even these inflexible patriots, who, after all, were men, fathers, sons, brothers, pause for a moment. The word "pardon" rose to the lips of all, but the doom was

irrevocable. Already the victims were at the foot of the scaffold.

Already had the man whom we have described seen them. They had seen him too, and at his aspect the daughter had pressed to her bosom her poor mother, pale with terror.

Trembling for Emma, the mother was almost fainting. It was her heroic daughter who supported her in her arms.

Emma looked at that man. Those two beings, so totally different, held a sort of communication with each other through that look. The man felt an unaccountable shudder run through his frame. The splendour of the virtue that surrounded her, dazzled him. He admired; he felt proud of experiencing this unwonted sensation, the existence of which nothing had hitherto revealed to him. The longer he gazed with admiration upon that pair, the greater was his pity. For pity had seized upon all the spectators, and had communicated itself, as by magnetic influence, to him. These emotions, to him so novel, threw him into a sort of reverie.

The man stood motionless as a statue upon his stage of death. He narrowly observed the young girl who was supporting the tottering steps of her mother, and who, at that moment, had only eyes for her. He heard, throughout the length and breadth of the square, the voices of the spectators asking

each other in eager tones, "Can nothing be done? Can no one save them?"

Then an idea suddenly struck him. He leaped from his scaffold. The people guessed it, and applauded. He approached Emma, and made an attempt to speak to her, but his tongue refused to give utterance, and clove to his mouth; but encouraged by the populace, and making a violent effort to obtain the mastery over himself, he ventured to say:

"Mademoiselle—no, I mistake—citizeness—the law permits a good patriot to save the girl who unites her future with his. Will you—pardon me—will you marry me? Say but yes, and you shall be saved."

Emma heard all, and gazed with a yearning fervour at her mother's ghastly face, for she was thinking of the blow that was about to fall upon her daughter. She drew from that look divine strength and heroism. Turning her beautiful eyes towards the man, she said:

"Would you save my mother too?"

It was with no faltering voice that she pronounced these heroic words. It was while regarding this man without agitation, without fear, and by the clear light of reason, and with ineffable sweetness that she spoke the words implied.

"I know you; I understand you; I see you, such

"Would you save my mother too?"—*P.* 144.

as you are. Your hands have shed innocent blood in torrents, but in them I will place mine. Your existence of opprobrium, of torture, of horror, I will share.

"I will be your wife if you save my mother's life as well as mine, and I will try not to die of grief. I will unite all the moments of my life to all the moments of yours. I will swear to love you, and I will love you. I will swear to obey you, and I will obey you.

"To this punishment, renewed every day, at every hour, at every instant, I will submit. I will accept it, I will bless it, if only you will save my mother."

In the sublime words she had uttered all these things were implied; and what her tongue did not express, might be read in her eyes.

The man of blood replied, in a voice which had become timid:

"I can only save *you*."

Emma drew a deep inspiration of relief from her tortured heart; and, freed from the frightful fetters in which this man's thought had for some moments held captive hers, she forgot him. She forgot the spectators—she saw nothing but her mother; she thought of nothing but rejoining her in heaven with the angels she so nearly resembled.

And so she gave up her spirit to her Father and Maker, a noble example of undying filial affection and duty.

THE NEED OF THE NOBLE SOUL.

Thou, of a hope and an aim sublime,
Mingling, unblest, with the sons of Time—
Great one, adoring the pure and the good;
Earnest, enduring, and misunderstood—
Soul, with capacities royal endowed,
Clashing, unread, with the rude in the crowd—
Man of the ardent and lofty will,
What shall the void in thy being fill?

More than the heart can bestow—far more—
Wakened to bliss by a voice before;
Taught the sweet lesson unwritten by earth;
Scarr'd in its wholeness of measureless worth;
'Shrining in Memory's fairest recess
Him whom it thrill'd with its first caress;
All that it hence shall evoke to be,
A broken though fine-toned melody!

More than the heart that can draw delight
Only from objects of sense and sight;
Playing sweet airs in the sunshine proud—
Scared by a threatening thunder-cloud!
Better were one of Parian mould,
Ever motionless, listless, cold;
Ah! 'tis a worship at holier shrine
Likeneth life to "a thing divine!"

Life in its fulness so to learn
How do the loftier spirits yearn!
Whom shall Adversity's advent move,
Clothed with the glory of such a love?
What shall be found a lamp to dim
Needing no earth-born power to trim?
When did even the death-bell toll
O'er a disunion of mingled *soul?*

S. A.

Gaston de Foix.

Gaston de Foix.

CHAPTER I.

Shall I relate to you, my young friends, the sad story of Gaston? Yes, for it is a lesson for youth. This book, written for the young, is consecrated to filial love. One of the characteristics of filial love is confidence, and Gaston died through not having had confidence in his father: and what an unhappy death that was you will read.

He was born in the Castle of Orthez, on the shores of the Gave, his father was prince of that province, Gaston Phœbus, Count de Foix, and Viscount Bearn.

It was at the period made illustrious by the Duquesdins and the Clissons. Gaston Phœbus, their worthy rival, a brave prince and a noble knight, had filled all Europe with his renown.

The celebrated chronicler, John Froissard, eager for the acquisition of facts concerning the contemporary great whom it was his task to immortalize, went and passed three whole months with Gaston Phœbus.

He had heard it whispered that this prince had had a son, so he made inquiries about this child, but none

dared reply to him. "The tale is too sorrowful," they answered, in a suppressed voice. At length he, with great difficulty, wrung the following story from an old squire.

It is this story which I am going to relate to you, and if I do not succeed in preserving the ever fresh and simple graces of the old chronicler, I will at least strive to retain as much as possible of the ingenuous simplicity of his style.

II.

Let us, in the first instance, endeavour to explain how Bearn and the territory of the Counts de Foix became united under one rule.

Several years before the events which we are about to relate, the powerful lord who reigned over Bearn by the simple title of Viscount (such was formerly the title of the Carlovingian kings, but since replaced by that of Prince), had given his two daughters in marriage, the one to the Count of Armagnac, the other to the Count of Foix.

Already advanced in years, and having no son who could be a support to him in his old age, he found himself suddenly threatened with a great peril; the

King of Castille, at the head of a powerful army, was preparing for the invasion of Bearn.

The Viscount of Bearn sent then to his two sons-in-law to inform them of the danger which threatened him, and to ask them to come to his assistance.

On the spur of the moment the Count de Foix, having summoned to arms his vassals and his friends, arrived to the succour of his father-in-law, who received him with the liveliest expressions of joy. They both, having collected their forces, awaited patiently until the Count of Armagnac should come to join them.

They wait d expectantly for three days, and during this time the Castilian troops, having crossed the Bidassoa, advanced into the interior of the country and ravaged it.

The fourth day a herald arrived from the Count of Armagnac, and proclaimed in his name that he should not come, and that, not having any possessions in the country of Bearn, he did not feel himself bound to take up arms in its cause.

This refusal caused the Viscount of Bearn as much mortification as surprise, and threw him into a state of great perplexity. He demanded of the Count de Foix, and the two barons of Bearn what he ought to do.

"My lord," was the reply of the Count de Foix,

"there is but one thing to do, and we will do it; we will fight your enemies."

Without a moment's delay, the Count de Foix, taking with him the flower of his own and the Bearnese troops, marched to endeavour to surprise the enemy, who had scattered themselves to pillage and ravage the country. They completely routed them, killed a great number, and compelled the remainder to take refuge in flight. They made prisoners the son and brother of the King of Castille, and would have taken the King himself if he had not sought shelter in a convent, disguised as a monk.

For the sake of his son and brother, the King of Castille hastened to conclude a peace, by submitting to all the terms imposed by the conqueror, and he took an oath, whereby he bound himself and his successors never more to disturb the tranquillity of Bearn.

When the Viscount of Bearn, after having signed the treaty, returned to Orthez with his son-in-law. He assembled all the nobility and the principal inhabitants of Bearn. He took by the hand the Count de Foix, and, in the presence of this assembly, he said:—"You are my son, and a good, brave, and honest one. You have saved my honour, and secured the welfare of my country. The Count of Armagnac, on whom I bestowed the eldest of my daughters, refused to come to my aid. He has lost

by this treachery all claim which he had, by right of his wife, to my inheritance. Therefore, John, Count de Foix, I appoint you sole heir to the country of Bearn after my decease; you, and your children after you. And it is my will that all the inhabitants recognize and acknowledge this right which I confer upon you. It is my command; it is my request."

The inhabitants replied with a unanimous voice: "Yes, we consent, and we desire it."

Thus it was that the Counts de Foix became sovereigns of Bearn, and from this time they resided at Orthez.

III.

The grandson of this valiant John of Foix, Gaston Phœbus, as celebrated for his talents as for his exploits, had all the qualities of a great prince; but one vice obscured all his shining virtues. He was swift to anger, prompt to suspect; his rage, after its first explosion, which was terrible, would remain unabated for a considerable time, and even when it appeared extinguished would break forth again in sudden flashes.

This suspicious and violent disposition was in a great measure the consequence of the numerous plots laid against him by his brother-in-law the King

of Navarre, so notorious in French history as Charles the Bad.

Charles the Bad, whose sister had espoused Gaston Phœbus, was a monster stained with every crime. He did evil for his own interest, and sometimes for the mere pleasure of doing it. His favourite weapon was poison. He had never ceased to sow dissension between the Countess of Foix and her husband. In spite of constant demands he persisted in retaining his sister's dowry under various pretexts. At length Gaston Phœbus began to suspect the Countess of having a secret understanding with her wicked brother, and his mind became seriously inflamed against her. At length he said:—"Go yourself and see the King of Navarre on this subject; and do not return until you have withdrawn your dowry out of his hands."

The Countess of Foix went therefore to Navarre; but Charles the Bad would not surrender anything. "It is for me," said he to his sister, "to watch over your interests and those of your son. I do not wish your husband to have your fortune in his own hands that he may squander it."

Nothing could be more false and calumnious than this accusation; for Gaston Phœbus was in truth generous and magnificent, but at the same time prudent and economical, and his finances were regulated with an order and intelligence very rare at that period.

The Countess of Foix remained therefore in Navarre, desiring very earnestly that her husband would recall her, but dreading his threats, and not daring to return without his permission. Gaston Phœbus was meantime becoming more and more confirmed in his suspicions, and in his anger.

It thus fell out that the only son of the Count de Foix found himself, at a very early age, motherless. He mourned her absence very sincerely, and would often innocently ask, with tears, why his mother did not come back, but without ever receiving a reply from his father.

And yet, notwithstanding, Gaston Phœbus loved his son most tenderly, and centred all his happiness and joy in him. When he had augmented his domains, or extended the rights and influence of his sovereignty, his delight was to say to himself: "Gaston will reap the advantage of all this."

The child loved his father and his mother as a child should love. What need to say more?

Lavishly endowed with all the gifts of nature, strengthened and cultivated by education, he grew every day in grace and wisdom.

The first smiles of spring are not more lovely than were the budding virtues of Gaston.

All eyes turned with love and affection towards that star which shed such soft rays at its dawning.

He was beloved by all the inhabitants of the country, as was seen when the day of his misfortune came.

IV.

Not being able to accomplish the return of his mother, Gaston obtained at last permission to go and see her. He was then about fifteen years of age. "He was," says Froissard, "the handsomest youth that was ever seen, strongly resembling his father, who shone above all the princes and knights of his time by the dazzling lustre of his outward gifts and accomplishments.

Gaston confided the care of his son to trustworthy persons, gave him a sufficient and suitable escort, and after having bid him a tender farewell suffered him to set out for Navarre.

Gaston, having crossed the Pyrenees, continued his route with all speed towards the castle inhabited by his mother. What a time of joy it was for him and her; and how short did the month which they passed together appear to both! He entreated her to return with him to Orthez, but neither his tender prayers, nor his affectionate caresses, had power to persuade her. "Has your father," said she, "commissioned you to bring me back?" Gaston was

obliged to reply, "No, he did not mention it to me." She resisted, therefore, the strong desire she had to return with him, and, to his great regret, suffered him to depart alone.

Happy at having seen her, very sorrowful at being forced to return without her, Gaston passed through Pampeluna to pay his respects to the King of Navarre, his uncle. "The King," said the old squire to Froissard, "gave him a very warm reception, kept him with him nearly ten days, and presented, at parting, both him and his suite with many valuable gifts. The last present that the King of Navarre bestowed upon the boy was the cause of his death. I will tell you why and wherefore."

When Gaston was on the point of departure the King took him privately into his chamber, gave him a little purse filled with a kind of powder, and said to him:

"Dear nephew, you must do what I am going to tell you. You see how the Count de Foix, your father, has conceived a hatred, very wrongfully, against your mother, my sister; I am deeply grieved at it, and you are no less so than I. There is but one way of re-establishing concord between them, and of restoring to your mother all her husband's former tenderness. You see the powder contained in this purse: watch for a favourable opportunity, and when you have found it, sprinkle a little of this pow-

der over your father's food; but above all be careful that no one sees you. As soon as he shall have partaken of this dish, he will be possessed by but one thought—that of becoming reconciled to your mother, and recalling her to him; and they will both love each other for ever after, and never wish to be separated again. It is the greatest happiness you can possibly desire. But above all things be careful not to reveal this secret to any one. If your father became aware of it, this powder would instantly lose all its virtue."

The child, who was ignorant of the true character of his uncle, had a great deal of respect for him. Like every one else at that period, he religiously believed in the virtue of enchantments, elixirs, and magic powders: he was delighted with this present; and when the king again enjoined him to act with the profoundest secresy, he replied: "Yes, uncle, I promise you willingly."

After having made this promise, he quitted Pampeluna, and continued his journey homeward.

Deplorable credulity, but still more criminal and undutiful promise! Can a child at such an age consent to conceal anything from his father, without incurring guilt? He should have had the courage to reply: "I will not promise you to keep a secret from my father; that would be to fail in the respect I owe him. Between us two there must be no secrets."

Or, even if taken by surprise, and the promise thoughtlessly given, had he afterwards interrogated his conscience, it would have told him, "A child surprised into making a promise, contrary to the law of God, is in no way bound by it. Cast off, as quickly as possible, this burden which weighs upon thy heart. Reveal the secret to thy father as soon as thou arrivest at Orthez. Art thou at liberty to act towards him without his knowledge, by the aid of a secret power, and without either he or thy mother knowing anything of it? Does thy duty suffer thee to place thyself between her and thy father, otherwise than as a pious son, equally full of respect and confidence for both? This confidence, canst thou repose it in a stranger, however nearly related he may be to thee?"

But the young Gaston did not thus question his conscience. He was under the influence of a preoccupation which absorbed all his thoughts and mental faculties. He thought of nothing but that so much desired reconciliation which was promised him. This object so noble, so desirable of attainment; this promise of so near a relative seemed to him sufficient excuse. If the enchanted powder did not work the desired change, or to speak more plainly, if it did not produce the reconciliation (for the possibility of treachery did not occur to his mind), what harm would be done?

The harm, alas! is already there in the mystery and concealment. A child, hitherto frank and confiding, is learning to dissimulate; and to dissimulate with one's parents is to practise falsehood and treachery.

V.

Gaston has returned to Orthez. The Count de Foix welcomed with transport his beloved son, and questioned him as to what presents he had received in Navarre. Gaston displayed them all, with the exception of the little purse, which he kept carefully concealed, and to which he never alluded.

And in truth his mind seemed pre-occupied, and somewhat melancholy; but the slight cloud which darkened his brow was attributed to regret at having quitted his mother. No one, therefore, took much notice of it; but it was the secret which really weighed on his mind.

From time to time he would ask himself whether what had been told him was true, if he was not the sport of an illusion, and if he were not in danger of becoming the instrument of the powers of darkness; but immediately after, the secret prospect of a reunion between his father and mother would re-assure and console him.

Some days passed thus.

Gaston had a distant cousin, a boy about his own age, named Ivan, who was brought up with him. They were both very fond of each other.

They slept in the same room. Often in the morning, before they were dressed, they would laugh and romp together, and amuse themselves by throwing their clothes from one bed to the other; as many little boys and girls have done before and since.

One morning in the midst of a frolic, Gaston having received his cousin's doublet upon his bed, playfully threw back his own. Ivan, on taking hold of Gaston's doublet, felt a packet, which he instantly discovered to be a purse filled with some powder, and said, "Gaston, what have you so soft in the breast-pocket of your doublet?"

These words disturbed Gaston; he made no reply, and said with a thoughtful air, "Give me back my doublet, Ivan; it is no business of yours." And Ivan threw the doublet back upon Gaston's bed.

On this particular day, Gaston was more thoughtful and melancholy than usual.

Now, three days afterwards it happened ("God, no doubt," says Froissard, "desired to save the Count de Foix") that the two children, playing together at hide-and-seek, chanced to quarrel, and Gaston, in the height of his passion, gave Ivan a box on the ear.

Ivan, in a fury, ran crying to the apartment of the

Count de Foix. Gaston Phœbus was at this moment just returning from chapel, where he had been hearing divine service. Seeing the child in tears, he said to him:

"What is the matter, Ivan?"

"Oh, my lord," said Ivan, "Gaston has beaten me; but if anyone deserves to be beaten, it is he, and not me."

"And wherefore?" said the Count, whose suspicions were instantly awakened.

For the stay which his son had made with the King of Navarre had inspired him with some uneasiness. The idea of some guilty design; some plot concerted between Gaston, his mother, and the King of Navarre, presented itself confusedly to his mind.

"By my faith, my lord," said Ivan, "since Gaston has returned from Navarre, he carries in his bosom a little purse, quite full of powder. I do not know what it is for, nor what he is going to do withit; only he told me that my lady, his mother, would shortly be restored to your favour."

"Oh!" said the Count. "Ivan, I command you be silent on this matter, and beware of disclosing to any person, whatsoever, that which you have told me."

"Yes, my lord," replied the child, "I will say nothing."

The Count de Foix then gave himself up to reflection: he suspected; he forbade any person to interrupt

him, and would see no one; but remained alone, solitary and thoughtful, until his dinner hour.

When that time arrived, he repaired as usual to the banqueting hall, where a table was laid out for himself, and another table was prepared for the knights and squires of his train.

The Count, according to his custom, washed his hands, and then seated himself alone at his table.

In those days, the children waited upon their parents at table, and only ate when they had finished.

Gaston waited upon his father as usual; and, also, according to the custom of the time, tried the dishes, that is to say, tasted them in his presence before offering them to him.

Gaston had no sooner placed the first dish upon the table, than the Count, deeply impressed by the revelation that had been made to him, attentively regarded his son, and perceived the end of the little purse hanging from his doublet.

At this sight the blood rushed to his head; restraining himself, however, he said:

"Come hither, Gaston; I would whisper a word in your ear."

The boy approached his father. In an instant the Count opened the child's doublet, drew thence the little purse, took a knife and cut the strings of it, saying as he did so, "What does this purse contain?"

Then, oh! then, there was still time to confess

artlessly the whole affair. But how could Gaston do it? His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth; speechless, pale with terror, he trembled from head to foot.

Meanwhile the Count opened the purse; he took the powder which was contained in it, and put some of it on a slice of bread, which he moistened with gravy; he then whistled to one of his hounds, which was lying near him, and gave it him to eat. The dog had scarcely tasted it, when he rolled over on his side, gave a low howl, and expired.

Transported with rage, Gaston Phœbus spoke not a word; but rising from his seat, he seized his knife, and would have rushed upon his son, but his arm was stayed by one of his squires, who threw himself before him, saying:

"For the love of God, my lord, do nothing rashly; inquire into the circumstances before you do any injury to your son."

The Count was at first only able to murmur in a broken voice:

"Oh, traitor! The unnatural traitor!"

He then exclaimed in a voice of thunder: "Ah, traitorous son! for thy sake, and to increase thy inheritance, I have endured so many ills; I have made war with the King of France, with the King of England, the King of Castille, the King of Navarre, the King of Arragon, and have maintained my cause

valiantly against them all; and thou wouldst slay me like a dog! Unnatural son! monster! but thou shalt die, and that immediately." And he rushed again upon the child, knife in hand.

But the knights and squires fell on their knees before him weeping:

"Ah, my lord," said they, "for the love of God, do not kill Gaston; he is your only son. Have him placed in safe custody until you have inquired further into the matter. Perhaps he did not even know what it was he was carrying in his bosom. May be he is innocent."

"Be it so," said Gaston Phœbus. "Let him be conveyed with all speed to the tower, and strictly guarded there."

VI.

The child was conducted, or rather carried, to the tower of the Castle of Orthez.

The nervous trembling of the limbs, which had seized upon him, had not yet ceased, his teeth chattered; the idea of the crime of which his uncle had wished to make him the instrument, now for the first time appeared to him in its full horror; it froze his heart, and paralyzed his every faculty.

Gaston Phœbus immediately convoked at Orthez

all the nobles, the prelates, and the most distinguished men of Bearn and of the domain of Foix. As soon as the assembly was formed, he explained to them why he had summoned them, of what crime his son was guilty, and how it was his intention that he should suffer the death of an assassin. But the assembly replied as with one voice:

"No, my lord; we would not that Gaston should die. There is no doubt that he has been deceived or bewitched: he knew not what he was doing. We all entreat your pardon for him."

The Count, hearing the whole assembly praying for clemency and pardon for Gaston (and at the bottom of his heart that was what he had hoped for, although he was so justly incensed), replied:

"Since it is your wish, I will grant him his life. I will keep him in prison a few months, and will then send him for two or three years to a foreign country, until my anger be appeased, and he, being older, shall have more sense, understanding, and duty."

And he dismissed the assembly. But the inhabitants of the domain of Foix would not depart until the Count had renewed to them his promise, so strong was their love towards the child, and for this purpose they repaired again in a body to the castle. Gaston Phœbus reiterated his promise to limit his son's punishment to imprisonment and exile. They

then returned to their homes, and Gaston remained shut up in the tower of Orthez.

These tidings were soon spread abroad throughout the country. Charles the Bad was at the very height of his wishes. If he had not succeeded in accomplishing the death of the father by the hand of his son, he had at least inflicted on both sufferings almost equal to death.

The news also reached Pope Gregory the Eleventh, who was then residing at Avignon. He carefully collected all particulars, and the real truth of these facts soon revealed itself clearly to his mind. He believed in the innocence of Gaston, guilty only of having placed confidence in a wicked uncle, and of having failed in filial duty and respect by hiding from his father a secret which concerned him. He charged the Cardinal of Amiens to repair immediately to Orthez, and to appease the Count of Foix by demonstrating to him the innocence of his son.

"Put an end," said he, "to the wrath of the father and the captivity of the son."

The Cardinal set out for Bearn; but, when arrived at Béziers, he went no further; for there he learned that he was *too late!* He returned sorrowfully to Avignon.

VII.

How shall I relate to you what had happened, dear young readers? The unhappy child was shut up in the tower, in a chamber into which very little light was suffered to penetrate. Overwhelmed, horror-stricken, crushed beneath the weight of his misfortune and his father's righteous anger, he made not the slightest movement, and remained stretched on his bed as one paralyzed, from the moment when he entered his gloomy dungeon. He continued in this state for ten days. He took scarcely any food, although a sufficient quantity was sent to him every day; but when the dishes were brought, he put them aside untouched, and so they were found the day of his death. It is difficult to understand how he survived so long as he did. No one was able to obtain permission to visit him, either to counsel or console the poor boy.

At the thought that his father believed him capable of so execrable a crime, and that this crime he had been on the point of committing, he gave himself up a prey to the most poignant anguish, and cursed the hour in which he was born, and prayed that God would put an end to his days.

On the tenth day of his incarceration the attendant

to whom was entrusted the task of bringing him his food, entered his dungeon, and said:

"Here is some meat for you."

Gaston seemed scarcely to heed him, and said in a faint voice:

"Put it down there."

The man turned and looked at him, and then, for the first time, noticed in the room the food untouched which he had previously brought. He immediately shut the prison door, ran to the apartment of the Count de Foix, and said to him:

"For heaven's sake, my lord, have a care of your son! He is starving himself in his prison, and I really believe he has not eaten anything since the day he went into it, for I have just seen all the food I have taken up to him, in a corner by his bedside, untouched."

Upon this information the anger of the Count de Foix was rekindled. Without saying a word, he quitted his apartment, and proceeded hastily to the prison where his son was confined.

Alas! he had in his hand at the time a little sharp-pointed steel blade, with which he was, at the moment the servant entered his apartment, attending to his nails. He had the door of the prison opened, and approached the bed. He held the little blade in his hand, with his fingers so covering the point that it could not have pierced a sheet of paper.

He shook the child by the collar of his shirt with his hand, saying:

"Ah! traitor! why do you not eat?"

And he turned away without saying or doing anything more. Unhappily, the sharp-pointed blade had just touched the child's throat, and upon a vein. It was a very trifling prick; but the boy had been so startled at the sight of his father, and he was so weak, that when he felt the point of the sharp blade touch his throat, and the blood trickle down, he turned his face to the wall, and expired.

Gaston Phœbus had hardly re-entered his chamber when the man whose office it was to carry food to Gaston, followed almost on his footsteps, exclaiming:

"Ah! my lord, your son is dead!"

"Dead?" said the Count.

"Ah! my lord—heaven have mercy on us!—it is but too true."

The Count of Foix shuddered, and refused to believe it; and, not feeling capable of going himself to ascertain the truth of the man's statement, he sent one of his knights who had just followed him into his apartment. The knight returned, and confirmed the mournful tidings.

Then all the former tenderness awoke in the bosom of that father now one no longer. The truth, hitherto so obscured, suddenly broke upon him with

"He shook the child by the collar of his shirt, with his hand, saying, 'Ah, traitor! why do you not eat?'"—*P.* 170.

the power of a thunderbolt. He comprehended at once the crime of his brother-in-law, and the innocence of his son. He wept and bemoaned the loss of his dear, only son, Gaston! so loving, so noble, so generous!

"Ah! Gaston!" he exclaimed, "what a misfortune! what a misfortune for thee and for me that I suffered thee to go to Navarre! Henceforth there is no more joy for me in this world! Ever must I regret thee, and reproach myself, my son! my noble boy!"

The body of the child was borne to its last resting-place amid the tears and lamentations of the whole country, and but a few years elapsed before that of Gaston Phœbus was interred by its side.

The principality of Bearn and of Foix passed to another family.

"Such was the fate of Gaston," said the old squire to John Froissard, as he finished the melancholy narrative. "It was his father's hand which incontinently struck the fatal blow; but it was the King of Navarre who was the cause of the death of his nephew, one of the most noble, generous, and loving of sons and princes."

BIRDS.

Ye birds that fly through the fields of air,
What lessons of wisdom and truth ye bear;
Ye would teach our souls from the earth to rise,
Ye would bid us its grovelling scenes despise:
Ye would tell us that all its pursuits are vain,
That pleasure is toil—ambition is pain;
That its bliss is touched with a poisoning leaven:
Ye would teach us to fix our aim on heaven.

Beautiful birds of the azure wing,
Bright creatures that come with the voice of spring;
We see you arrayed in the hues of the morn,
Yet ye dream not of pride and ye wist not of scorn.
Though rainbow splendour around you glows,
Ye vaunt not the beauty which nature bestows;
Oh, what a lesson for glory are ye,
How ye preach of the grace of humility!

Swift birds that skim o'er the stormy deep,
Who steadily onward your journey keep;
Who neither for rest nor slumber stay,
But press still forward by night or day,
And in your unwearying course yet fly,
Beneath the clear and unclouded sky;
Oh, may we without delay like you
The path of duty and right pursue!

Sweet birds, that breathe the spirit of song,
And surround heaven's gate in melodious throng;
Who rise with the earliest beams of day,
Your morning tribute of thanks to pay;
You remind us that we alike should raise
The voice of devotion and song of praise:
There's something about you that points on high,
Ye beautiful tenants of earth and sky!

Adelaide;

OR,

THE JUDGE'S DAUGHTER.

Adelaide;

OR,

THE JUDGE'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

Among the Judges of one of the Superior Courts of Law of the last century, Mr. Wentworth was distinguished by his superior learning and his severe probity. Profoundly versed in the science of the law, endowed with a penetration equal to his love for study, indefatigable in the exercise of his duties, this Judge was the oracle of his own circle, and the honour and pride of his country.

Happy in the respect and consideration of the public, his own virtues and those of his family constituted the joy of his home. His wife, by whom he was tenderly beloved, had presented him with a daughter, Adelaide, destined to equal her mother in grace and goodness.

Judge Wentworth loved to live in seclusion. The pleasures of the world and society had but few attractions for him: nevertheless, out of regard for his wife, he had submitted, as to a necessity, to that

gaiety which others seek as an amusement. He went into society, and resigned himself with a good grace to be amiable and amused. He would then return with pleasure to his peaceful home, rendered still more dear by the contrast.

One evening he had promised to accompany Mrs. Wentworth to a ball. He wished to keep his word, and we shall now see of what serious events this apparently frivolous circumstance became the cause.

Mr. Wentworth had undertaken to draw up a report in the case of an important law-suit. It referred to an inheritance of a sum of 20,000*l.*, the possession of which was disputed by two relations. The one was a rich foreign merchant, who had come to England expressly on account of this law-suit, and who, by dazzling the town with the display of his wealth and luxury, hoped to gain the attention of the Judges, or perhaps to awe his opponent by the sight of so much splendour. The other was an aged widow, so timid that she had not even dared to visit the courts of law, and so poor that the loss of this suit would leave her daughter without a dowry, and her old age without bread.

The good wishes of Mr. Wentworth, it need hardly be said, were in favour of the widow. He had carefully studied this case, from the notes, the evidence, and the documents; and the day after the ball was that on which he was to deliver his judgment.

"While reflecting on the important duty he had to fulfil, he was on the point of giving up the ball."—*P.* 177.

While reflecting on the important duty he had to fulfil, he was on the point of giving up the ball. This idea haunted him for a long time: he felt as if those precious hours of the night which were going to be devoted to pleasure, were claimed by duty; that it would be better to sit up far into the night to study an affair on which the fate of a family depended, than to mingle in laughter and pleasures which, while bewildering his head, could never touch his heart.

But while he was giving himself up to these reflections, Mrs. Wentworth entered his study, and said she was going to make her toilet for the ball, and as her countenance was already radiant with anticipated pleasure, he could not bear to disappoint her, so he drove away troublesome scruples, and prepared to accompany her.

The papers, however, which he was preparing for the Court on the morrow were hardly commenced. He therefore summoned an old barrister, who served him in the capacity of secretary, and who, by his probity as well as his intelligence, was well worthy of his confidence. He installed him in his study, gave him the papers relating to the case, explained it to him, pointed out what books he would have to consult, confided to him the commencement of the report, and begged of him to finish it.

"I am going to sit up to please my wife," said he;

"you, my friend, will sit up for me. When I return to-night, I shall find you here. You will show me the result of your labours, and we will go over the whole of the papers together; and to-morrow, like the jackdaw in the fable, I will strut before the Court decked in your plumes."

Delighted with this friendly banter from his patron, the old barrister smiled, an unusual thing with him, and set to work at once.

During the ball, Mr. Wentworth endeavoured to dismiss all care, for he saw his wife smiling and happy; but the case of the poor widow would at times intrude painfully upon his mind. As he looked on that radiant crowd, so gay and brilliant, amusing itself in those gilded saloons; as he contemplated all that wealth of diamonds, flowers, and splendour, he could not help thinking of her who, in a humble abode, was anxiously awaiting the decision of the morrow.

He felt distressed for a moment at this thought.

"I should perhaps have done better," said he to himself, "to have staid at home and finished my notes and report, myself. Suppose my secretary should forget some particulars, or if he should not view the case in the same light as I do; perhaps he may go to sleep, or mislay some of the documents. I will return home, and help him to finish this case; or, better, do it myself.

He was about to put his thoughts into execution, but on approaching Mrs. Wentworth, to explain matters to her, and ask her to return home, he saw her so animated, so happy, surrounded and *fêted*, that he felt reluctant to disturb her pleasure. He had not even the courage to prefer his request. He remained therefore, and endeavoured to divert his mind. But the presence of the rich foreigner, who was also one of the guests at the ball, and who beset him with his homage and attentions, was painful to him; and his thoughts constantly recurred to the poor widow, who was perhaps passing this night in anxiety and prayer.

At length, as everything in this world must have an end, this eternal ball came to one; and Mr. Wentworth, at four o'clock in the morning, was able to return home.

The secretary was fast asleep in the study, but by his side were the papers, perfectly in order, and the report, together with voluminous notes, finished. However great Judge Wentworth's desire may have been to talk the case and evidence over with this skilful and experienced man, he could only obtain from him a few almost insignificant and unmeaning words; he himself was hardly in a state to awaken a sleeping man, for he felt worn out by the unusual fatigue and excitement. The sounds of the orchestra still rang in his ears; a medley of flowers, diamonds,

jewels, and plumes floated before his eyes, amidst all of which the image of the foreign merchant rose before him like a troublesome phantom. It was with difficulty he could collect himself sufficiently to read hastily over the report which he was to deliver as his own judgment and work.

He succeeded in doing so, however. Gradually his mind became calm and his ideas lucid. The report appeared to him perfectly well drawn up, and the notes showed great acumen and judgment; the arguments were logical and convincing; the conclusions undeniable; only—it was all on the side and in favour of the foreign merchant!

"Poor woman!" said Mr. Wentworth.

It was already nine o'clock. He sorrowfully put all his papers and the documents of the case into his bag, and repaired to the court.

The widow was anxiously awaiting the verdict that was to decide her future. Mr. Wentworth perceived her in the hall, and sighed. But he had a duty to fulfil; his course was clear; and he could not swerve from it. It was therefore with a more than usually serious air, but in a firm voice, that he summed up; and from its tone and conclusions, the poor widow's case was lost.

The foreign merchant carried back this new access of fortune to his own country. The widow retired to a garret, where she passed her time in working at

her needle, to provide a scanty subsistence for herself and her infant daughter.

A short time after this event, Judge Wentworth was bereaved of the wife he loved so well.

II.

Six years passed rapidly away, by which time the poignant grief which the loss of his wife caused Mr. Wentworth was softened. He bestowed a double share of his affection on his dear child Adelaide, who had grown to be, as much by her amiable disposition as by her charming features, the living image of her dead mother. Adelaide was now sought in marriage by a distinguished nobleman, whose family had been for years on terms of closest intimacy with the Wentworths—the Lord Rivers.

The length of his pedigree, and the considerable fortune he possessed, were his least titles to the favour of Judge Wentworth, who, as well as his daughter, highly appreciated the excellence of his disposition and the exalted goodness of his heart and mind.

This alliance was soon about to be concluded, and Mr. Wentworth regarded himself as one of the happiest of men.

One day in his study, he was busily occupied with an intricate question of law, he wished to seek for information in some volumes which he had not taken down from his library shelves for several years. Behind these long undisturbed and ponderous books he perceived a piece of parchment, old and discoloured. This much astonished him, for it was his principle that order was not only a precious quality, but a virtue: and in his house the rule was ever, "A place for everything, and everything in its place."

He took the document therefore, rested awhile on the library steps, and began to read it; but he had no sooner done so than a cold chill struck to his heart, a mist crept over his eyes, the paper fell from his trembling hands. . . . . He summoned all his courage, however, picked it up, read it through from beginning to end, and then felt fully convinced of his misfortune.

This paper was no less than a title-deed, authentic and unimpeachable, from which it was clearly evident that the fortune adjudged to the foreigner belonged of right to the widow.

But how came this paper there? Doubtless on the night of the unlucky ball, he had dropped it in giving the others to his secretary, or else the other must have lost it while searching for some book which he wished to consult. There was no other way

for accounting for the mystery. The old barrister had been deceased two years, and moreover, of what avail would it be to know the cause of such an effect?

Thus the negligence of Mr. Wentworth had caused the ruin of a family.

If a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet, he would have been less terror-stricken, less cast down than he was by this discovery. Conscience, it is true, did not whisper to him as she might perhaps to some man of doubtful honesty, that he had committed a fault to which any man was liable. Such a pitiful excuse was not possible to a man of his rectitude. He knew well that that verdict was the result of his summing up, and of that alone; and had that title-deed been examined by him, the verdict would have been for the widow.

A very different idea took possession of his mind. He thought that between a careless and a dishonest judge there is very little difference; that forgetfulness in such an affair amounted almost to complicity; and that negligence in this case had all the appearance of crime.

He shuddered at the thought. Although his error had no witness but God, who reads all hearts, he experienced the confusion and remorse which the innocent man must feel who, by some act of imprudence, has given the evil-minded the right to suppose him guilty.

Then his thoughts wandered to the unhappy victim of his negligence, deprived during many years of a fortune which by right belonged to her, and condemned to suffer all the struggles and privations of poverty.

Then, for the first time a sudden idea sprang up in his heart, and brought with it a spark of consolation. The thought was: "Is it not in my power to make reparation for all?"

He seated himself at his desk, and made a rough calculation of the value of the disputed property, the interest for six years, and then the compound interest. "Twenty-four thousand pounds," said he to himself, "that is the sum of which I have been the means of depriving this poor lady. That is the amount of what I (if I do not, now that I know the wrong, repair it), have robbed her."

He then set to work at another calculation. What was the value of his town mansion? What was his pretty country seat, and the land belonging to him worth? To these two sums he added five thousand pounds which he was keeping in reserve for Adelaide's marriage portion. He reckoned up the total, trembling as he did so, with fear and hope.

It is completed. The sum total of his fortune, as known to him, is about twenty-five thousand pounds. He breathes again; his oppressed heart is at length relieved.

"I will preserve my honour; I will repair the evil I have done; I have no longer a reproach to fear, either from God or my conscience. By to-morrow the act of reparation shall be accomplished.

"Let me restore to this unfortunate family, together with the riches that belong to them, that pleasure and repose which I long since snatched from them. I renounce without regret a fortune I could never retain without crime. I was never proud of being rich: I shall not be prouder of being poor. I will perform, without a single feeling of pride, this duty which I owe to justice, and I will ask nothing from men, neither their aid, which would humiliate me, nor their praises, to which I have no claim."

From these flights of virtue and feeling he was, however, obliged to descend to family considerations, and it was with bitter grief he reflected that his determination, however honourable to himself, would involve the ruin of his daughter's prospects. Not that his resolution was at all shaken by the reflection, still he could not help regretting, for her sake, the loss of that wealth to which he attached no value for himself.

It seemed as though he had reared her in habits of luxury and opulence, to reduce her afterwards to poverty; for nothing would remain to her but her mother's dower—a very modest sum—and would not

this change of circum tances prove a fatal bar to that marriage, in the prospect of which both father and daughter were so happy. What would Adelaide say? How would she resign herself to such a change in her destiny, to so painful a sacrifice?

Agitated and distressed by these cruel thoughts, Judge Wentworth confined himself to his study. He denied himself to all visitors, and sat up that night, absorbed in thought, and in arrangements for the morrow.

III.

The next morning Mr. Wentworth called his daughter, and said to her with a melancholy smile, and in a solemn tone:

"Come with me, my dear Adelaide, and let us visit together your mother's grave."

They proceeded thither on foot. On their way, they had to pass in front of the mansion inhabited by Lord Rivers, who was at an open window, and bowed to them. The Judge perceived by a slight trembling of the arm that rested on his own, and by a sudden flushing of the fair face, how dear to his daughter's heart was the man whom she had chosen for her husband. This was a fresh subject of grief to him.

They both acquitted themselves with full hearts

of the pious duty they came to fulfil, visiting the grave of that beloved being who, they trusted, from the abodes of the blessed, still looked down on those so dear to them on earth, after which they returned to their home, which they had no sooner reached, than Mr. Wentworth led his daughter into his study, made her sit beside him, and thus addressed her:

"A person of my acquaintance, my dear child, is placed in a very delicate position; and from a motive which I will hereafter explain to you, he wishes to have your opinion. He is a person of station—a lawyer. By his fault, he has been the ruin of an honest family. He was a long time in ignorance of it, and indeed has only become aware of it within a few hours; but his fault, as well as the consequences of it, are still a secret to the world. He wishes to know what you think he ought to do. It is he who consults you by my mouth. Speak."

"I pity him," said Adelaide; "for he must suffer greatly at knowing the evil of which he has been unwittingly the cause; but there can be no hesitation as to the course he should pursue. He should this very instant make all the reparation in his power, by restoring to that family all the property of which he has been the means of depriving them, if it be in his power."

"But the sum is immense; it is equal to the whole of the fortune he possesses; and moreover, in thus

indemnifying strangers, he would sacrifice the prospects and happiness of his own children."

"His children! If they have any sentiment of honour, could they accept from their father a fortune which is not his to bestow? If they have so little heart as to display any unwillingness or regret, then I should doubly pity their father. He will have lost more than his fortune."

"Such is then your opinion, dear Adelaide?" said Mr. Wentworth. "You think that it is his duty to make full restitution."

"Oh yes, undoubtedly," she exclaimed.

"Well, then, come to my heart and console me; for this lawyer who has neglected his duties, this father who has ruined his family, is your father!"

Adelaide, rushing into his arms, and covering him with caresses, said all that the most tender filial piety could dictate. As for the fortune she was about to lose, and the happiness that had been so nearly within her grasp, she did not waste a thought upon them. She had but one absorbing idea, and that was to aid her father in the accomplishment of his sacrifice, and render it as light as possible to him.

Mr. Wentworth tasted at this moment a pleasure far beyond all that fortune can bestow. He almost ceased to reproach himself for a fault to which he owed so much happiness.

Nevertheless, from time to time sorrowful reflections disturbed his joy.

"And this marriage," said he to Adelaide. "Alas! it is no longer possible. Without dowry for the present, without hope for the future, delicacy forbids us to think of it further. It is a very great misfortune, for he is everything that I could have desired in a son-in-law, and if I have read your heart aright——"

Adelaide interrupted him.

"Do not speak to me of marriage," she said. "I do not even know if I regret it. I will not even think of it. All that I do know, my dear father, is that your daughter has now become necessary to the happiness of your old age. I will never quit you; I will never change my name; you have rendered the name of Wentworth so honourable, that I desire always to retain it."

Thus it was that this generous girl devoted herself entirely to her father. She had admired his virtue without once reflecting that she had equalled it.

They both agreed that, from that very day, their house, their country estate, and all the property they possessed should be transferred to the widow. Already the luxuries with which they were surrounded seemed a burden and a reproach to them: they longed to enjoy with a clear conscience their new and modest existence.

At noon Mr. Wentworth repaired to the dwelling of the widow. He explained to her the error which he had committed, and announced to her how he intended to repair it.

This woman was no more dazzled by prosperity than she had been cast down by adversity. She carefully inspected the title-deed which was presented to her, and having convinced herself that it was authentic and unimpugnable, she felt that the sacrifice offered by the lawyer was just. Simply and calmly, and as though speaking of an affair of small importance, she said:

"Sir, there is nothing in your conduct that astonishes me; but that which you do as an act of justice, I ought to and do receive as a noble benefaction. You were free to keep your fortune, and I have, perhaps, the right to refuse it: nevertheless, I accept it. Be equally generous with me, as I show myself just and resigned towards you: suffer us to share it."

Mr. Wentworth had anticipated this offer, but he was too proud to accept it. There was, between this poor widow and this upright lawyer, equally distinguished by the elevation of their sentiments, a struggle of generosity, in which Mr. Wentworth came off conqueror.

That very evening he installed in his handsome mansion the widow and her daughter. He himself

took possession of a very small house in the suburbs, which Adelaide did all in her power to prove was very large and commodious. This amiable girl devoted herself wholly to her father, and flew to anticipate his every wish. She appeared always happy, because, in the first place, it was her duty to be so, and, in the next, because if she had appeared discontented in her new position, it would have been a tacit reproach of her father.

What more was wanting to those two noble hearts? Each tasted with delight the fruit of their own and each other's virtue. Their recompense, a quiet and approving conscience: they desired no other.

IV.

Heaven, who often grants to virtue only that inward recompense which is known but to itself, resolved on this occasion to make an exception to the general rule; and this is what happened:

Lord Rivers was informed of what had occurred, and he felt surprised and aggrieved.

"What have I then done," said he, "to merit such treatment at the hands of Mr. Wentworth? Could he suspect me of having changed towards his

daughter because she could bring me no other dowry than the glory and renown of a noble action?"

Fired with generous ardour, he went without delay to the cottage, and contrived to procure admission to the Judge's presence, from which the world in general was rigidly excluded.

"Sir," said he, "when once you had promised me the hand of Miss Wentworth, and she had condescended to acquaint me that her choice was in accordance with your own, I should have thought that events, whatever they might be, would in nowise have changed a determination founded upon esteem. If you had been appointed Lord Chancellor of England, would you have broken your word with me? No. Well, then! can you do so any the more on the pretext that you are become less rich? Have I less right to your daughter's hand than that widow had to your fortune?"

And as Mr. Wentworth was about to interrupt, he added, eagerly:

"More, sir; you are unjust towards me: your conduct gives rise to prejudices against me, which you seem to share. May not my acquaintances and the public suspect me of having renounced your daughter's hand because you have renounced your fortune? Who knows whether it be you who have withdrawn your promise, or I who have broken mine? May not malevolence attribute unworthy

sentiments to me? And it is you, sir, who will be the cause of this!—you, for whom I have ever entertained such profound respect, so true an affection!"

Seeing that Mr. Wentworth appeared moved, he continued, with warmth:

"Oh! suffer me to call you my father. Restore to me her whom I love so much, and whom I now admire as much as I love her. Make not my fortune a burden to me. Is it my fault that I am rich? Abjure that pride which would cause my misery, and perhaps hers. Would she dread being under too many obligations to her husband? They will be all on my side. Some days since, I might have believed myself her equal: to-day I feel she honours me in accepting my hand and fortune."

The stern Judge was still a father: he could no longer resist such generous entreaties; so Adelaide became Lady Rivers, and constituted the happiness of her husband without in any way detracting from that which she had promised to her father.

It was thus that Mr. Wentworth found the sweetest recompense for his noble conduct in the happiness of his daughter. But that is not all. Informed of this generous action, the King resolved to honour his virtue by a striking mark of his favour. He conferred upon him the dignity of a title and the honour of knighthood, raised him to a high station in his profession, and gave him a large and special

income, persuaded that he who had performed such an act of severe justice upon himself, would render it likewise to others, and that his learned brothers would be proud to honour as their chief, him whom they admired and respected as a model of virtue and probity.

Thus the conduct of Mr. Wentworth and his daughter Adelaide met with a speedy and rich reward. But we must not take advantage of this example, but should always remember that our love for virtue must be ever disinterested, and free from the hope of gain or recompense. Let this old motto be always ours: "*Do what is right, happen what may.*"

The Desert Island:

A TALE OF ANCIENT ROME.

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CHAPTER I.

In a desert island of the Ægean Sea, towards the middle of the third century of the Christian era, there lived an exile. None knew his name, and no one ventured to interrogate him on the subject. The inhabitants of the neighbouring islands, who came from time to time in light barks to renew the supplies of the provisions necessary in his solitude, called him Ægesilaus; but this Grecian name was not his. They had come at last to the conclusion that he was a senator of Rome, formerly illustrious and powerful, now banished by the Emperor.

The most profound silence was kept about him; for in those days men feared to speak of a proscribed person, lest they should draw upon themselves a similar fate: above all, they dreaded awakening the suspicions of their Emperor—a prince who had never been known to pardon.

Never had a message even reached him from

Rome to beguile the weariness of his solitude: never had a traveller visited him. He was dead to the world from the moment that he lost favour with his master. If ever any one in Rome bestowed a thought on him, it was only to say:

"He who is now called Ægesilaus is truly unfortunate: he is buried in his desert island as in a tomb. But at least, beneath the stone of the sepulchre, his thoughts would sleep with him for ever; whereas, in this isle they wake day and night for his punishment. This banishment is frightful. Heaven preserve us from incurring the displeasure of Cæsar!"

Those who thought thus had, doubtless, reason for pitying him; but this exile had, in his solitude, consolations unknown to the friends who had abandoned him. He had preserved the calm serenity of a pure conscience: he thanked Heaven for having made him rather unfortunate than guilty, and Heaven, to recompense and console, had bestowed on him a virtuous and loving child. For he was not alone. His young son, his Oppien, whom, at the moment of his flight, he had carried with him in his arms, had grown and thriven rapidly under the blessing of Heaven, and the tender care of his father. As at first by his playful gambols and childish sports he enlivened this gloomy desert, so in after years, by the charm which the graces and

virtues of his youth shed around him, did he make it a home.

Oppien did not regret what he had never known. He was unconscious that he was in a desert island, that he was an exile. This narrow strip of land contained all that he loved—he was happy.

Ægesilaus delighted in cultivating the germs which nature had implanted in the fresh and guileless heart of his son.

His success had surpassed his expectation; for, unlike the education received in cities, this instruction, given in a desert isle, had been accomplished entirely under one tutor, and he a father. There had been no opposing influence of bad examples, dangerous companions, or vicious counsels.

Things relating to the external world only reached the mind of the young Oppien, modified by the wise admonitions of his counsellor and guide. Examples of moral worth had alone been presented to his still young and impressionable mind, which had naturally modelled itself upon them.

It was not until his character had been so much formed for good, and framed to virtue, that Ægesilaus suffered him to contemplate moral evil.

The child had hitherto been ignorant of the worst vices of life and of the extreme wickedness of men. He believed virtue to be as essentially inheritant in the human heart as transparency was natural to the

waves that softly washed the shores of his island home, as goodness to the Divinity of whose presence he felt conscious.

This illusion, salutary to him in his earliest youth, would have become fatal if it had lasted longer. Ægesilaus, to dispel it, taught his son that science which was best calculated to open his eyes to the real nature of his fellow-men—history.

In this study the young man often found much to afflict him; then he turned with pleasure to his favourite poets.

Poetry, by exciting the imagination of Oppien, created for him a new source of pleasure. It is the language of the tender affections, which only occupy, ordinarily, in our existence a small and circumscribed place, but which was Oppien's whole existence alone with his father in that little island. He vented, therefore, in harmonious measures the sentiments with which his heart was overflowing. His imagination, refined and etherealized by solitude, created around him a thousand delightful phantoms, with whom he seemed to converse during the day, and who, at night, came and strewed his couch with roses.

Years, however, were beginning to accumulate on the head of Ægesilaus, and a sad misfortune also befell him. He was seized with a burning, an unconquerable desire to behold once more his native

country. Like a slow fever this ardent but unattainable desire consumed him and undermined his strength day by day. Even the companionship of his son, which formerly had soothed all his sorrows, now served but to aggravate them.

"Alas!" said he, to himself, "what a destiny is his; and it is his father who condemns him to it. It is for my sake, and on my account, that he is doomed to live in this frightful desert, far from all that honours and ennobles life. Fair flower, which should bloom and flourish beneath the sunny sky of thy native soil, must I then behold thee languish on this solitary shore?"

For fear of afflicting Oppien he carefully concealed his grief, but the very efforts which he made to hide it but served to redouble its violence.

It was at first easy to deceive his child, but it was not long before Oppien anxiously remarked that his father smiled upon him less frequently than before. That he indeed sometimes even repulsed his filial caresses, which now seemed to weary him, and that he indulged in solitary walks, and meditated with a clouded brow.

Oppien questioned him, but Ægesilaus always made an evasive and impatient reply.

At length, trembling for his father's health, he determined to observe him more closely.

II.

One day the sky was serene, the sea was calm, and Ægesilaus, leaving his son at home in their cottage, was wandering alone upon the sea-shore reflecting upon the past and grieving for the future. Oppien followed him unperceived. He saw his father, after walking for some time to and fro upon the pebbly beach, direct his steps towards an elevated rock. Oppien contrived, by taking another path, to reach almost at the same time the summit of this rock, overshadowed by umbrageous trees. Ægesilaus seated himself without seeing his son; his sorrowful gaze was fixed upon the vast extent of waters. For a whole hour he remained absorbed in this melancholy contemplation, then suddenly, heaving a deep sigh, a convulsive sob broke the silence of the spot.

Oppien utters a cry, and in another moment is in the arms of his father. The old man, whom the excess of his emotion has betrayed, can no longer refuse to confide the secret of his grief to his dear Oppien.

"It is your wish, my son," said he, "and I will not further hide from you the cause of my sorrow, for I feel that your loving sympathy will lessen it. Exile, my child, this it is which is killing me. I have for a long while been able to endure it and conquer

myself, but sorrow has at length triumphed over my courage and I yield.

"My imagination unceasingly pictures to me that beautiful Italy, that superb Rome, where I passed my childhood and youth, where my mother loved me, where her ashes repose. A thousand recollections that I thought long since dead, and which were but sleeping, have awakened for my torment. I am besieged by them every moment of my life.

"My eyes see nothing; my ear hears nothing; my thoughts are nothing but Italy, the land of my birth.

"A mournful charm attaches itself to the objects that I regret; I feel that these recollections are killing me, and yet I love them.

"It is a burning fever that devours, and at the same time sustains me.

"Rome! Rome! Oh! that I might but behold thee again. In Rome I love everything now, even the very friends who have so cruelly abandoned me. I would still look upon them once again; fain would I hear once more the sound of their voices, and the confused murmur of the people in the Forum, and the sighing of the wind through the arcades of the Coliseum. Again would I see the Tiber flow at my feet, drink of its waters, and lave my limbs in its golden waves. All these longing desires are madness, I know it; I know it; but my will is powerless to resist them. Here it seems to me as if my oppressed

breast cannot respire freely: I feel stifled for want of air. My inflamed blood rushes perpetually to my heated brain with the same ever-recurring images. My night is one long period of wakefulness and watching, or else a succession of dreams which, by offering me the realization of my wishes, but render the awakening more painful.

"And thee! I weep also for thee, who, without having deserved it, sufferest on thy father's account."

Here Oppien eagerly interrupted Ægesilaus.

"I? oh, do not speak of me! I regret neither those enjoyments that I have never known, nor those cruel men who have banished you. I love but you; and if I am unhappy now it is because you are."

As he spoke he threw himself into the arms of his father, and they both for some time mingled their tears in silence.

"Weep no more, Oppien," said Ægesilaus, at length. "Thy grief afflicts, and at the same time consoles me. Fool that I am. I regret that which I have lost, instead of thanking heaven for what in its mercy it has left me. What are all those friends towards whom my thoughts are perpetually wandering when compared with thee? Those spots, inhabited by indifferent or ungrateful friends, are they worth this desert island, which thy filial piety embellishes? Since I have confided to thee my sorrows I feel lightened of them. Afflict thyself no more

then, Oppien; henceforth your father will be happy."

And in truth the countenance of Ægesilaus had recovered its serenity. He raised his eyes with an expression of beaming gratitude to heaven, and if a tear still trembled on his eyelids none could have said whether it was the last tear of affliction or the first of happiness.

Oppien had fallen into a profound reverie; he shook it off at length to entreat his father to relate to him the story of the misfortunes that had caused his banishment. Ægesilaus consented. They both the next day returned to the same spot, when Ægesilaus spoke as follows.

III.

"I was born at Rome of one of those old senatorial families in which the ancient Roman virtues have been transmitted from father to son for many generations. Flavian is my name. My father had me educated and brought up with the greatest care in the public schools. There, from amongst numerous companions, I chose a friend.

"From the first moment of our meeting our hearts clung to each other, and soon we became inseparable.

"The habit of constantly seeing each other, and that community of sentiment which a community of studies gives birth to, drew still closer those bonds of friendship. After my parents I loved no one in the world so much as my friend, and he, at least I think so, loved me with equal warmth and sincerity. For him there was no happiness without Flavian, for me no happiness without Severus; for his name is Severus, Septimus Severus."

"What say you, father?" exclaimed Oppien. "Septimus Severus, who is now Emperor. Is it possible?"

"Himself. Listen, and you will no longer be astonished when you hear me say that my sorrow and misfortune are without hope.

"Often, in our solitary walks in the suburbs of Rome, he loved to converse about our future destiny. Our young imaginations delighted to pierce the veil of the future, and create for ourselves an ideal life, which circumstances were hereafter destined to realize—at least for him.

"We delighted in reposing a mutual confidence in each other under the seal of inviolable secresy. These dreams were to us a mysterious and sacred property, to share them with our friend was to double the enjoyment of them, but to reveal them to others would have been to profane them.

I will not tell thee what were my dreams of the

future. Of love of country, of eloquence, of glory, I dreamed incessantly; divine flowers which were never to bloom for me, or which the mind of adversity was soon to wither.

"But for him! all his dreams were those of ambition, and of an unbridled ambition. His wish was to combat, to conquer, to reign; and he had so profound a conviction and belief in these illusions, that I sometimes shared it with him, and finally it ended in my believing in what he called his destiny.

"One circumstance, which history will doubtless record, further served to feed his ambitious hopes.

"Virgil was at that period at Rome, the object of almost divine worship. His verses were accounted to possess not only the divinest poetry, but also a mysterious revelation of the secrets of the future. To the oracles of Delphos, and of Clarus, which were beginning to be silent, had succeeded the oracles of Virgil.

"One day Severus and I went to pay a visit to the tomb of the poet in the neighbourhood of Naples. Ever preoccupied with his ideas of greatness, Severus said to me: 'Let us consult the oracle of the genius of the place. I have faith in its words. Poets are the favourites and the interpreters of the gods.'

"He drew me towards the tomb. Under the shade of the laurel-tree that covers it with its glossy,

dark green leaves, he threw himself upon his knees, and laying the book on the marble: 'Open at hazard, said he to me, 'and let the Divine will be revealed to me by the hand of friendship.'

"I opened the book, and presented him the page. His emotion was great, and his eyes could scarce discern the characters through the mist that came over them. Mine had already scanned that famous line:—

"'*Thy destiny, son of Rome, is to rule the World.*'

"Overcome with joy, Severus threw himself into my arms. 'I shall be Emperor,' he exclaimed. 'My friend, what hast thou to desire? Speak. The first use I will make of my power shall be to crown thy wishes.'

"I smiled at what I considered his simple credulity, and yet I confess I felt his enthusiasm was somewhat contagious.

"This sacred spot, this hallowed tomb, that voice which Virgil himself seemed to have mingled with the murmur of the wind which whispered among the leaves of his laurel-tree, all contributed to disturb my senses in a manner which seemed to me almost a warning.

"In the features of my friend I read a future of glory and power. His eyes flashed, and his attitude was that of a hero who sees the whole world silent before him.

"We renewed, under Virgil's laurel tree, the oath to be ever faithful to each other."—*P.* 209.

"This circumstance decided his destiny—perhaps that of the universe. From that moment he believed himself called to the throne, which alone was sufficient to make him determine to reach it.

"For, as he had faith in his future, he dared everything, and he succeeded in everything because he dared and believed success certain.

"We renewed, under Virgil's laurel-tree, the oath to be ever faithful to each other. We agreed, moreover, to preserve the most inviolable secrecy on this circumstance as well as on all the dreams which had occupied our youth. Commodus was about to ascend the Imperial throne, and the man who should announce himself beforehand as his successor, would not even have had that pity which we accord to what we despise.

"A short time after, Severus and I separated. He went to pursue in the camp the fulfilment of his imperial dream. I sought in oratory and senatorial honours a more modest fame. We met but rarely, but I never ceased to love him.

"Severus, impatient to obtain the object of his ambition, never halted by the way. His thirst for power became a furious, and soon a ferocious passion. The more he advanced in rank and renown, the more he became insensible to everything but what could tend to promote his ambitious ends. The life of men, the peace of the world, the welfare of his

country, were no longer of any value in his eyes.

"If he still continued passionately to love glory, it was chiefly in order that his fame might be converted into power. Friendship (at least I think so) had henceforth few acknowledged claims upon him. If at distant intervals he continued to cultivate mine, it was more because he hoped hereafter to find in me a support in ascending the throne, and a useful man to maintain him in it.

"For, let me confess to you, I was not without influence in the Senate. More than once I had the honour of being menaced by the tyrant, and I once narrowly escaped being immolated by Commodus on my cerulean chair, whilst defending against him the liberty and laws of my country."

At this point Flavian remained for some time buried in deep thought; then recovering himself, he smiled affectionately upon his son, and continued his narration in the following terms:

"I have related to thee before the surprising events of which Rome became the theatre after the murder of the tyrant, the assassination of the virtuous Pertinax, on whom my voice had bestowed the Imperial purple; the disgrace and shame of the empire, put up to auction by the soldiery. The reign of the infamous Julianus lasted but a short time. He was deposed, put to death: and Rome,

terror-stricken, learnt with dismay that in the provinces three different armies had just proclaimed three different Emperors.

"These were, Albinus, Niger and, lastly, Severus.

"In the midst of these terrible commotions, whilst the weak and vacillating Senate trembled and hesitated to pronounce a decision, I received a letter from Severus.

"He announced to me that he was marching upon Rome at the head of his troops; that he hoped to enter the capital, thanks to me, in the character of a liberator, and not as a victorious enemy; that he relied upon my friendship, and that he should soon be happy to prove to me his. His letter finished with these words:—'*Remember Virgil's laurel-tree.*'

"On receiving this letter, I became a prey to the most cruel doubt and even despair. I loved Severus, but I loved my country better.

"Severus, become selfish, cruel, and implacable, was he the sovereign that I could desire for Rome? I admired his talents; I was proud of his friendship; but I could not give him my voice.

"Personal ambition went for nothing in my consideration. I disdained to reflect whether Severus, raised to be Emperor, might not associate me in his power. The recollections of my youth alone appealed to my heart; and of this inward conflict no painful impression remained with me, because it was

friendship alone for some time maintained a struggle with patriotism.

"Patriotism, however, triumphed. With Niger I was personally unacquainted; but Niger, I had been told, was humane and generous. Niger, become Emperor, would restore to the Romans all they had lost by the death of Marcus Aurelius. I pleaded for him with so much the more warmth, inasmuch as I wished to prove to myself the reality of this triumph of duty over friendship.

"The enthusiasm that I displayed carried all the suffrages with it, and, with one unanimous voice, the Senate proclaimed Niger.

"Vain efforts of expiring liberty! Severus, the conqueror, entered Rome; entered it not as a liberator, but as an enraged enemy. Banishment or death was immediately the fate of every senator who had voted against him.

"I was not yet doomed, but I flattered myself with no vain hope. I saw plainly that if the sword of death remained suspended over my head, it was only to make the stroke more terrible by being delayed. I therefore witnessed the punishment of the greater number of my friends, and then my turn came. By order of the new Emperor, I was summoned to appear in his presence.

"He was standing in an apartment of the palace, at a window from whence he was looking down upon

the street, where the execution of some of his enemies was then proceeding. I entered. A slight tremor shook his frame, and then he turned and looked upon me.

"Never shall I forget that fatal look, in which were depicted the most profound contempt, the most implacable hatred.

"I approached him. Instinctively he grasped his dagger, and I shuddered involuntarily, for I thought he was about to assassinate me with his own hand; and to me, who loved him still, the spectacle of such fierce hatred was truly terrible. He restrained himself, however, and made an attempt to speak, but doubtless he could not find words to express his rage. With teeth convulsively clenched, he was unable to utter a word, and his pale lips only wreathed themselves into a bitter and mocking smile. He quitted the room.

"I was left alone, confounded, speechless. I was prepared for bursts of passion, for all the fury of a friendship which he believed betrayed, for insults, for death itself, but this terrible silence surpassed all that I had dreaded.

"After some minutes had elapsed, an officer of the guard came to arrest me. I was stripped of my wealth, my dignities, even of my very name. I was condemned to terminate my miserable existence in a desert island. Citizens were forbidden, on pain of

death, to receive me, or even to hold any communication with me.

"My son, you know the rest."

IV.

Oppien had listened to this recital with the most profound attention. His mind was engrossed by one sublime idea.

"My father," said he at length, "Severus has doubtless some virtues, since he has been able to appreciate yours. He has loved you, he is not therefore insensible. You must know what would be most likely to have some influence over him?"

"Glory, my son!" that glory which is acquired by arms, and which, in its turn, confers power on its possessor. He loves the glory of the battle-field—victories are his only festivals. He glories also in the songs of the poets, which re-awaken the emotions of his youth. These are his sole passions—warfare and poetry."

"Poetry," said Oppien, and his eyes flashed for an instant with fire, for he felt, as it were, the voice of inspiration speaking within him. But he speedily imposed silence on himself. He continued to converse tranquilly with his father, and the old man had no suspicion of the thoughts and ideas that were working within him.

Night had already spread her dark veil over the solitary island. Everything was sleeping, the very waves themselves seemed to slumber peacefully. Flavian, comforted by the confidence he had reposed in his son, also slept quietly for the first time for many a long, long night. Oppien alone was keeping watch. He had wandered from his hut, and was sauntering on the pebbly shore. He was experiencing that pain, mingled with delight, that one feels when a new idea or thought is awakened within us, moving the whole soul by its mighty influence.

"Poetry," said he to himself. "Ah! poetry then can move the soul of Severus. . . . That heart so hard has still a vulnerable point! and that point I know. Harmonious measures can soften that lion's savage nature, and these measures I possess—they are here in my soul. . . .

"And I have not dared to give them utterance! I have shrunk from their melody like a timid child. I have rejected the gifts of Heaven. . . . Seest thou not, Oppien, why Heaven has made thee a poet? Didst thou then think that this talent was only given thee for the amusement of thy indolent youth? On others this talent has conferred glory: on thee it will bestow far more; the happiness of saving thy father.

"Yes, I will dare it; yes, Heaven, who knows my filial affection, will inspire me with strains capable of

touching the hardest heart. I will wring from Severus his admiration; I will stifle his hatred by producing in him boundless gratitude, for he shall owe to me the honour of an immortal name.

"In return for some years of happiness which he will restore to my father, I, yes I, will give him ages of immortality."

Oppien's plan is resolved on. He will sing, in a poem, the victories which the Emperor has won over the barbarians; he will go to Rome; he will seek permission to repeat his heroic verses before Severus, and obtain from him the pardon of Flavian.

He keeps his design profoundly secret from his father. Why flatter him with a hope that may perhaps prove vain?

He seals up, therefore, this sacred and holy purpose in the depths of his own heart; it is never absent from him; it has become the one sole purpose of his life, to the exclusion of all others.

In the presence of Flavian he represses and subdues all outward sign of pre-occupation and absence of mind. He affects to be more engrossed and pleased than ever with the sports natural to his age; and no one would ever suspect that beneath that calm and smiling exterior deep thoughts and emotions were working.

But as soon as he could be alone, he rapt himself in the one idea that had taken possession of him.

Alone, he wandered by the sea-shore, seeking inspiration.

And inspiration came at his summons. It filled his soul, and from it issued brilliant images, impassioned stanzas, soft, melodious rhymes. His verses breathe sometimes the martial sounds of the warrior's clarion, sometimes the soft accents of love. Coursers neigh, bucklers clash, swords glitter, the thunderbolt bursts; then tenderness, pity and love murmur their most dulcet notes. Sentiments the most impassioned, and the most opposite, are by turns expressed—desire, fear, anger, grief, admiration, all are alternately depicted.

The poem is finished; but now how to deceive the watchful tenderness of Flavian? How obtain permission to absent himself for a time? Perhaps his absence would cause a painful suspicion to arise in his mind. This idea disturbs and checks him for a moment; but filial piety knows how to endure, and will even consent to see the esteem that is its due diminish, provided only it is conscious of meriting it the more.

Oppien then timidly addresses himself to his father, and requests permission to go and pay a visit to Rome. "He wishes," he says, "to see with his own eyes those wonders of the world which have hitherto only been to him imaginary. He will then return to Flavian, never more to quit him."

The old man is at first quite confounded at this unexpected request.

"His son has then at length doubtless grown weary of sharing his father's exile. That daily, hourly devotion which has no witness but Heaven, no reward but in one's own heart, has at length grown wearisome."

But soon Flavian reproached himself for having for a moment indulged in such thoughts, and it was then himself whom he accused.

"How selfish have I been until to-day! Why compel Oppien to remain in this desert island? The Emperor only condemned his enemy. Flavian, more cruel still, condemns his child. Why deny him the happiness of living with his fellow-men? Why destroy for him at once both the present and the future?

"No; even Severus himself would not wreak upon that child the hatred and the vengeance which he owes only to Flavian. It would be more than tyranny, it would be baseness, and of that Severus is not capable. Let him depart, then.

"I am about to lose all that constituted the joy of my existence. It will be like a second exile, more cruel than the first.

"But Oppien will enjoy his youth. It is time I resolved upon this sacrifice. My solitude will be gladdened by hopes of his happiness. The thought

of the pleasures he is going to taste, of the glory which perhaps he will obtain, will sustain and console me. I will live again through him in that world to which I believed myself for ever dead. In his person I will quit this desert where my implacable enemy had confined me. Nothing will remain here but this miserable, worn-out body; my soul will follow in his footsteps.

"Perhaps even this salutary crisis will put an end to my troubles. The last links which still attach me to life will be broken. I shall die happy at leaving my son free, and at having broken the chain that bound him to banishment in a desert island."

Such were the thoughts of this good and tender father, from which it will be seen how far he was from suspecting the thoughts and schemes, no less generous, which filled the bosom of his son. The time of Oppien's departure at length arrived. Some few remains of the former opulence of the old senator allowed him to travel rapidly. He speedily arrived at Rome.

Rome! when the traveller first catches a glimpse of its walls, he experiences many emotions; but of these different and varied emotions, Oppien felt not one. Absorbed in his great purpose, he was indifferent to all around. He entered the capital of the world as he would have entered the most modest and secluded hamlet. He passed before all the master-

pieces of art and grandeur, and passed by the trophies of power, without pausing to bestow a look upon them. He did not seek to discover the friends who had forgotten Flavian in his misfortune. Their timidity might have recoiled from the boldness of his attempt; or their cold and cutting scorn have chilled the ardour of his courage; or their indiscretion might have betrayed him; and besides, he did not wish to owe anything to them.

Alone, and without any other support than his own courage and the approbation of Heaven, he presented himself at the gates of the palace. He inquired if it were true that the Emperor admitted those who wished to recite verses in his praise.

"Yes," was the answer; "but if you are not certain of success, you had better not make the attempt. To poets whose songs are worthless, or those who do not do justice to his greatness, the Emperor is merciless.

"An uninspired poet is, in his eyes, a State criminal; expect no pity from him. Your very youth, far from being an excuse in his sight, will but make you appear more impious. He will punish you as a criminal adventurer, who dares profane and ridicule his glory, in an age when it is scarcely permitted to contemplate it."

Nothing daunted by these words, however, at the hour when he was informed the Emperor was accus-

tomed to admit to his presence those who wished him to hear their verses, he presents himself. The Imperial Majesty, the splendour that reigns around, those armed soldiers, those courtiers, all the glittering group and luxury that surrounds the sovereign of the world, nothing moves him; for he sees nothing. He listens only to the beating of his heart; for he knows that he is engaged in a pious duty approved by Heaven.

A roll of papyrus in his hand, he enters the vast hall where Severus was seated, surrounded by a numerous court.

The Emperor was seated on a throne of ivory. He appeared to be plunged in profound meditation; his brow bore the impress of black care; his manner was gloomy and taciturn; everything about him announced a savage disposition; hard as a millstone was that heart which Oppien hoped to soften.

The young poet remained for some time standing. His mien was modest but confident; and the Emperor appeared to be unconscious of his presence. At length he deigned to cast a look upon him. Neither his youth, nor the charm which his budding virtues had imprinted on his open brow, softened that regard which, like the one that had been formerly fixed on Flavian, had something in it fatal, scornful, cruel—a look that seemed to say:

"Yet another rash attempt, and soon a fresh victim. Fool! who attempted to extort praise and admiration from Severus, your punishment is already decreed."

Oppien read this terrible thought in the eyes of the Emperor, and he felt it redouble his courage and strength.

The Emperor has made a sign, and Oppien is going to begin. On him every look is fixed, but those looks, taking their tone from those of the Emperor, have something cruel and malignant in their expression. Where are now those rocks, those waves, that sky, that seemed to listen and answer him? Ah! the desert is here, he sees it in that scoffing assembly.

This solemn silence of so many men collected together, seemed all the more terrible from the stern and forbidding expression of their countenances. They all discern, with savage joy, that Oppien shudders and trembles; they hope, that like so many others, he will recoil from the ordeal, and fall, terror-struck, at the foot of the throne.

But virtue is stronger than terror, and even death. She raises Oppien far above the hostile crowd. He thinks of his father, and then it is not blood that courses through his veins, it is a leaping flame. He raises his eyes to Heaven, then casts them round upon the assembly. That look in which beams the

fire of genius, is not without its effect in thawing the icy bonds in which the whole assembly seem bound, and already a faint smile of encouragement is visible on the countenances of a few.

He begins; they listen.

Every eye is upon him; but he, he has no eyes but for Severus. Upon Severus alone are directed all the rays of the bright flame smouldering within him. His voice resounds like a celestial melody in the midst of this solemn silence.

Irresistibly impelled by this torrent of harmony, dazzled by the images which rapidly succeed each other, Severus strives in vain to resist the power whose influence he is beginning to feel. Already he is, in imagination, far from his palace; he is in the midst of the battle-field; he hears the neigh of the war-coursers, the sound of the clarions, the shouts of the soldiers; he is intoxicated with fury, with glory.

Ah! Oppien, seest thou how upon his ivory throne that man so proud and haughty is now all thine own? Seest thou how at thy will he rages, melts, trembles, or weeps? Seest thou how, sometimes carried away by sudden transports, he claps his hand on his sword, and starts to his feet; then how he sinks back again, fearing to lose one of those accents that so transport him?

Oppien has ceased, but they still listen, and now, at a signal from the Emperor, the applause bursts forth.

Severus descends quickly from his throne. He calls the young poet, and presses him to his heart.

"Happy youth, so signally favoured by Heaven, what wouldst thou of the Emperor? Speak; thy prayer is granted, I promise it."

"Prince," said Oppien in a modest tone, "your glory and bravery could not fail to inspire me, young and unworthy as I am; and love and admiration have stood me in the stead of genius. I am the son of Flavian. Need I tell thee more?"

Oppien was no longer the inspired poet, who a little while ago reigned over the Emperor himself by the ascendancy of his genius. He was a pious and timid child, soliciting a favour from his Prince, the refusal of which would blight his life and kill his father.

At the name of Flavian, Severus started, and hatred, like a dark cloud, spread over his countenance; but he looked again upon Oppien, trembling with emotion. The cloud passed away, and he said with a tranquil smile:

"I restore to thy father his country, his rank, his riches, his friends. Hasten to carry him my free and entire pardon. For having forgotten Virgil's laurel-tree he was banished from Italy, let him return to it under the shadow of thine."

The Pastor's Story.

CHAPTER I.

In the valley of Altenotting, on the confines of Bavaria, stands a modest little chapel, at which officiates a good and pleasant old pastor. Travelling in Germany, some years since, I was a guest of this good man, for a few days, and of course I visited the chapel, which, in his opinion, was the sight best worth seeing in the whole district. It was a rustic edifice enough, principally remarkable for its outer walls, which were covered with pictures representing various calamities incident to life—fires, shipwrecks, sicknesses, battles, &c. These were votive offerings in return for blessings bestowed, in accordance with the simple and primitive customs of the country. I entered the chapel, the interior of which was illuminated by a number of little silver lamps, whose brilliancy formed a striking contrast to the darkness without, for twilight was fast deepening into night at the period of my visit.

Before my eyes had completely recovered from

the suddenness of the transition, my attention was attracted by a voice, at some distance from me, offering up a prayer in accents apparently of the deepest gratitude.

This voice was that of a Bavarian labourer, advanced in years, and attired in his holiday garb.

"Heavenly Father," he was devoutly repeating, "blessed, ever blessed be thy name, for having restored sight to my eyes, and freedom to my footsteps: thou, by whose aid I see once more the beautiful sky, the verdant fields, the temple where thou art worshipped, and the features of those I love. And, above all, be thou praised and blessed a thousand times for the choice of the beloved hand which was the instrument of thy great mercy!"

If these were not the exact words of the old man, they convey at least the sense of his prayer.

My curiosity was greatly excited. The old man's silvery locks, thinly scattered over his brow, the sound of his voice, which seemed to tremble for very excess of happiness, all interested me powerfully. I followed him out of the chapel. He held in his hands a curious picture, which, in presence of a numerous concourse of spectators, he was about to place among the others. I approached, and requested permission to see this pious offering.

The old man was represented in the hands of the oculist at the moment of undergoing the operation

for cataract; he was surrounded by his family on their knees in prayer. The oculist was a fine, handsome young fellow, whose features expressed a more lively and tender interest than is ordinarily experienced by men who are familiar with sickness and pain. It was a striking and original scene, painted with more than ordinary skill, and I felt as if I should never weary of looking at it.

"Who, then," I inquired, "is this fortunate and skilful surgeon, whose efforts have been thus blessed by heaven?"

"It is not a surgeon, sir," replied the old man, in a tone of mingled pride and affection; "nor is it an oculist; it is my Karl; it is my son!"

"Your son?"

"Yes. That young man who is trying to conceal himself among that group of people; there he is: he, with the blessing of God, restored sight to the blind eyes of his poor old father."

"I am a foreigner," said I, "but virtue is of all countries, and to an Englishman every generous man is a brother. Let me see you, young man, I beg, and request you to relate to me the story of what you have done."

Karl appeared agitated and confused. He blushed, and would have shrunk away; but he felt himself detained by a hand which gently pressed his. It was that of my venerable host, the good pastor of

Altenotting, who, attracted by our conversation, had rejoined us.

He addressed me as follows:—

"I will relate to you, my good friend, the story which the modesty of this young man would perhaps prevent your hearing from his own lips. Karl will, I hope, however, finish the recital I am about to commence."

And the silent crowd gathering quietly round their beloved pastor, in the soft evening twilight, listened eagerly to the recital of a story, all the circumstances of which were well known to them, but which they were still happy to hear over again.

Their looks turned with eager interest, sometimes on the narrator, at others on the old man and on his son, and often on me, as if to enjoy the emotions I experienced; for they all seemed to take an honest pride in an action that shed lustre on their secluded valley.

The following is, nearly word for word, the story as the good pastor related it to me.

CHAPTER II.

'THAT old man, Wilhelm Ströer, brought up from his earliest childhood in the fear of God and the love of his parents, has reared his own young family in

the same principles. He has transmitted to his children the virtues which he received from his fathers—a noble heritage, worth far more than riches and grandeur. I may say before his face, without fear of inspiring him with pride, which will be always a stranger to his honest heart, that Wilhelm Ströer and his sons are the models of our village. Is it not true, my friends?'

A unanimous shout of assent was the reply.

The pastor continued—

'God, whom we should always thank and adore, whether he bestows or withholds his favours, blessed Wilhelm's honest industry. His barns and storehouses were overflowing with the gifts of Providence; his flocks multiplied and increased. All succeeded with him to his heart's desire. Whether he was too proud of his temporal prosperity and of the good conduct of his children; whether he forgot to render thanks for all this happiness to the Great Bestower of it; whatever the cause might be, the hand of God fell upon him. A veil spread over his sight, and day by day it grew darker and thicker, till he could only behold the glorious light of the sun as through a thick cloud, and faintly discern the beloved features of his children. And this darkness, ever increasing, threatened to shadow his eyes in the gloom of eternal night!

'Many a time when, led by one of his sons, he

came to worship in this holy temple, I used to say to him—

'"Wilhelm, let me advise you to go to some skilful surgeon. True it is that God alone can cure you, but to that end he will employ the hand of man as a means. Beware; to refuse the help of man is to tempt the Almighty."

'"Well, sir," was the old man's reply, "His will be done. I do not believe in the science of your doctors; and the bare idea of putting myself in their hands makes me shudder. If it should be the will of God that I should be blind, I will bless Him in his wrath."'

The pastor, interrupting himself at those words, and addressing the good old man, said—

"You remember, Wilhelm, that you held this language towards me; your sentiments were honourable, but you were wrong."

"I confess it now," replied Wilhelm; "but do you remember, sir, what I used often to say to you, with a laugh: 'The doctor who is to operate on Wilhelm Ströer has not yet taken his degree.' Was I right?"

The listeners smiled as they looked at Karl, regarding him with affectionate interest, and

The pastor continued—

'Whilst Wilhelm Ströer saw the dark cloud which obscured his sight grow thicker every day—whilst his footsteps became more and more uncertain—his

family gave themselves up to the most lively alarm. Karl, especially, the younger of his sons, brooded incessantly over the misfortune that threatened his father. Often and often did he conjure him to have recourse to surgical skill, but without effect; all his prayers and entreaties were vain.

'As the father's malady increased, so likewise did the son's melancholy.

'One beautiful evening in autumn, Karl visited me in my garden, the prospect from which is very extensive. His eyes wandered sorrowfully over the magnificent scene that lay stretched around us, and on the sky, crimsoned by the last rays of the setting sun. Never had the atmosphere seemed purer and more fragrant, never had the sky looked clearer or more lovely than on this evening.

'Karl sighed heavily.

'"Ah, sir," said he, "how beautiful is nature. But do you know I reproach myself with the pleasure I experience in contemplating it. I am ashamed of tasting a delight that will soon be for ever lost to him to whom I owe it. Blind!" he continued; "ah! what a calamity! what suffering for him! He will see us no more. It is on that account especially that he regrets his sight. Oh! if by the sacrifice of my life I could restore him that gift of heaven!"

'He hid his face in his hands, and I saw a tear steal from between his closed fingers.

'"Take courage," said I; '"sooner or later your father must make up his mind to have advice. If we succeed in overcoming his obstinacy, we need not go very far in quest of a doctor. Thirty miles from here, at Munich, resides a famous oculist, whose marvellous cures are the admiration of Europe."

'"At Munich," he eagerly exclaimed. "You believe, then, in the possibility of curing my father? It is true, then, that the oculist's art has some power? Tell, oh tell me all you know about this doctor."

'I repeated to him all that I had heard about the famous oculist, and his astonishing successes. Karl listened to me with the deepest attention, then he suddenly said—

'"The science of this admirable man will doubtless expire with him; for he is jealous of it, no doubt, and would not communicate it to any one."

'"You are mistaken, my young friend. Like all great men, this oculist possesses as much humanity as talent. He loves his art for art's sake, and for the good of his fellow-creatures, and not for the wealth or fame he can derive from it. He delights in giving instruction in his art to a few intelligent pupils."

'"And would he do this for the son of a humble labourer? He would surely be offended at the mere proposition."

'"Undeceive yourself, my young friend. If you are going to ask him to visit your father, he will come

as willingly to your modest farm as to the mansion of a nobleman."

'"He come here! alas that would be useless, for my father would stubbornly refuse his assistance. No, sir, it is another idea that has taken possession of my mind. I must go to Munich. The famous doctor must teach me his art. I must return to cure my father; yes, to cure him. He will not refuse my aid —mine; he will not reject a hand that is so dear to him, a hand that God will bless. Come, sir; come into the chapel, and unite your prayers with mine. To-morrow I depart."

'I was confounded. A young man, almost without education, and hitherto so timid and retiring, to take all at once so bold a resolution. I represented to him the immense difficulties of his undertaking. How would he obtain permission to be present at the doctor's lessons? How would he succeed in understanding them? How would his hands, accustomed only to the roughest labour, acquire the necessary suppleness? How would he manage to subsist in Munich, and conform to the habits of the other students? How console, and, at the same time, innocently deceive his father as to the cause of his absence? for Wilhelm must suspect nothing, or all would be spoilt.

'But Karl's resolution was not to be shaken. Heaven no doubt inspired it. I promised him to

keep his secret. I took upon myself to excuse him to his family as best I could, and he set out on his journey.

'His father, cruelly afflicted at his absence, sorrowfully shook his head when I strove to give a somewhat plausible reason for Karl's departure. A short time after, the poor old man became quite blind, and then it was he said, or rather groaned forth—

'"Oh! Karl, Karl, is it at such a moment that you fly me? Now, when I can no longer see thee, shall I not have even the consolation of hearing thy voice? It is in vain that in the thick night that overshadows me, I seek for my youngest born to guide my steps. Cruel! ungrateful son, why hast thou deserted me?"

'Noble boy! thus unmerited suspicions spread throughout the valley, and, entertained even by his own father, were the sole recompense of his self-sacrifice. He had no confidant but me, no witness but God.

'But it is for him now to give you some details of his stay in Munich. You will like to hear them from his own lips.'

Karl required a good deal of persuasion; but, at length conquered by my entreaties, he consented to finish the recital which the good pastor had commenced, and took up the thread of the story.

CHAPTER III.

'I PASSED fifteen months at Munich. I had not dared to ask money from my family for a journey, the object of which I could not explain. I was therefore compelled for subsistence to employ in menial labours a portion of that time already too short for my arduous and important studies. I lived, nevertheless, by dint of severe privations, and my supplications obtained from the great oculist permission to follow him and attend his lectures.

'It is a sharp trial, sir, to study hard in the midst of poverty, and to endure the pangs of hunger at the same time with the workings of the brain and mind. But such for several months was my fate. However, I did not complain. What do I say, sir? I scarcely thought of it. The sole thought that engrossed me, rendered me insensible to all the rest.

'The most cruel trial of all to me was, that, at the beginning, the learned lessons of my master were not intelligible to my weak and uncultivated understanding. The more I strained my mind to comprehend them, the less I appeared to succeed. I then saw that, as our good pastor had told me, to make any progress in a science, it is necessary to have begun to study it betimes. My companions, precisely

because they knew Latin and Greek, comprehended instantly what the doctor said to them in German. Accustomed from childhood to combine ideas, they seized the whole force of an argument, where I only perceived unmeaning sentences and sounds that bewildered me.

'But my excellent master took the same interest in me as in his other pupils. Eyewitness of my deficiency, he took pity on it. Often, when addressing my fellow-pupils, his thoughts were with me. In the course of his lessons, he would often descend from the heights of his theories to the infirmity of my intelligence. He read my embarrassment in my face, and would say gently: "Let us begin again. There is one amongst you who has not quite understood." Whilst almost in tears at being the object of so much kindness, ashamed at seeing every look fixed upon me, I redoubled my attention. He repeated the same instructions in another form, which was within my reach. Oh! what a master! what talents! and what goodness of heart.

'Unfortunately for me, my fellow-pupils were far from resembling their master. A hundred times they would have forced me to abandon my resolution, if my courage had not been sustained by prayer and faith.

'They were ashamed and angry to see me in their ranks. They openly conspired to compel me to

flight. Insults, threats, annoyance, nothing was spared; and when they saw that my resolution was indomitable, they gave over violence and had recourse to biting sarcasm.

'Incessant were the jeers and jibes hurled at the peasant who wanted to metamorphose himself into a doctor. My hands, especially, which were hardened by working in the fields, were an inexhaustible source of raillery for these young gentlemen of the lavender-kid school.

'I know, sir, that there is a friendly kind of jesting which we give and take cheerfully. It was thus they joked amongst each other; but with me, it was mockery, bitter, cruel, hostile mockery, disgust, contempt.

'But what mattered to me their impotent malice? They knew not why this peasant lad was aspiring to science, and I took care not to let them suspect. A sweet hope consoled me through all, and enabled me to bear their ill-treatment with patience.

'And yet more than once, I will own to you, this patience was cruelly put to the proof; more than once was I tempted to pay off all old scores by a well-directed blow in some mocking, grimacing face that had nearly driven me past endurance; but I thought of my father, and restrained myself. Such a burst of passion, by causing my dismissal from the professor's classes, would have ruined all.

'The moment at length arrived when I believed myself sufficiently skilled for the operation of my cherished plan. I revealed my secret to the professor. He embraced me with almost paternal tenderness, and predicted my success. My comrades, when he informed them of the motive that had brought me among them, suddenly changed in their conduct towards me. They took a most affectionate leave of me, and there was not one of them who, on quitting me, did not receive, in a friendly pressure of the hand, a token of pardon for all he had made me suffer.

'I arrived at home. Our good pastor undertook to explain the cause of my absence to my father, who was delighted at my return.

'I feared resistance. I experienced none. After his first transports of joy had in some measure subsided, he exclaimed: "It is not in vain, then, that I have put my sole trust and hope in God! Oh, my son, it is indeed the hand of Providence, for it is nothing less than a miracle which has transformed thee from a poor hardworking labourer into a skilled physician. Come, my Karl, I am ready."

'When my father held such language towards me, must I confess to you, sir, I trembled. To the confidence which my success in my studies and the praises of my master had inspired, succeeded, all at once, a feeling of deep discouragement and mortal

terror. It seemed as if my art, to acquire which I had toiled so long and painfully, were going to forsake me.

'As I was about to commence the operation, my sight grew dim. In the midst of the solemn silence that reigned around me, my heart beat violently, and my hands, which in the hospitals of Munich, in presence of the professor, had always been so steady, began to tremble.

'Stricken with fear, I paused to collect myself, and recover, if possible, my presence of mind. I lifted up my heart fervently to God. I do not know exactly what took place at that moment, sir. I can only say an invisible power seemed to direct my hand; but I heard a cry. I saw my father fall on his knees; my ear caught these words: "you have cured me," and I fell fainting in the arms of my brothers.

'There was a talk of my returning to Munich, and of seeking fame and fortune in the career rendered illustrious by the name of my patient and talented master. But no; science has given me all I expected of her; she has no further delights to offer me comparable to that I already owe her. I wish for no other glory than that of aiding my father in his labours, of instructing myself in his virtues, and, if I can, imitating them.'

Such was the recital of the good and excellent Karl. I thanked him with tears in my eyes, and

parted from him with difficulty, for I felt as if I already loved him as a brother. As for the venerable pastor and the good Wilhelm, I felt towards them as towards old and long-tried friends.

For my part, I have simply related the story of the farmer Wilhelm and his son, as it was told to me by the venerable pastor of Altenotting.

Nellie.

"Come now, aunt, do tell us a story," exclaimed my sister Amy, one winter evening, as we were sitting around the cheerful fire. "Tell us a tale that will amuse us all. You know you have promised many times."

"Well, dear, I have no objection to keep my promise; now, if you wish it, but my story must be a true one."

"Oh, yes," I exclaimed, "tell us about something that happened long ago."

"Shall it be a merry tale or a sad one?" asked my aunt.

"Oh!" cried Willie, "let it be something sad; you know what Shakespeare says—

"'A sad tale's best for winter.'"

"Well, dears, I will try and please you all," replied aunt kindly; "although I cannot do so without causing myself some degree of pain: but listen—"

'Many, many years ago, just after my marriage, I went on a visit to Hawksworth, where your aunt Rogers then lived. It was just after her husband's death, when their only child was but three years of age. She was a lovely child, with auburn hair hanging in sunny curls around her snow-white forehead, and lips lighted with a meaning and affectionate smile, seldom found on the face of so young a creature. A few days after my arrival, she went out to play, as she was used to do, in a field close to the house. And there she remained until the hour for tea, unmissed by us all. At tea-time her mother went out to call her, but the usual reply of that merry voice was not heard. Louder and louder your aunt called "Nellie," "Nellie!" but no answer was received.

'"Never mind," said my husband, "she has perhaps gone a little further away than usual; she will come in presently."

'"We will call her again in a few minutes," said her mother, seating herself at the table. "I dare say she has run down to the apple-trees. She often does so, little dear!"

'We commenced tea, without much concern for the absent one, for Nellie was a good child, and scarcely ever went further than the gate at the end of the field. Therefore her mother did not appear to alarm herself. But as the shadows lengthened, we all began to grow very fidgety; and your uncle put on his hat, and went

into the field in search of the little wanderer. In about half an hour he returned, but without Nellie.

'"Have you not found her?" I exclaimed.

'"No; has she not returned?"

'"No!" we gasped. "Can you hear nothing of her?"

'"There are no signs of her or her playthings in the field," replied my husband sadly.

'"Do go again," said the child's mother in a tone of great excitement, "she may lose herself; perhaps she has wandered on to the road."

'He went, but night came on; and it was quite dark long before he returned. And when he did come, he was alone. He had not seen Nellie. He had made inquiries of many people, but none of them had seen or heard anything of her. Your aunt was almost distracted with grief. She implored us all to set out at once, and with the assistance of some of the neighbours, your uncle started again; but I remained with your aunt. It was a night I shall never forget. The rain poured down in torrents, the earth seemed to shake with the noise of the thunder, and the lightning was terrific. I thought of poor little Nellie, perhaps all alone in that dreadful storm; and then I thought of your uncle and the kind friends who accompanied him. I was foolishly fearful of lightning, and how I got through that night, with no other companion than your almost distracted aunt, I cannot

tell. I remember how I felt, as the first beam of light came in at the window. It seemed as if my troubles were coming to an end. The thunder could then be scarcely heard, and, at your aunt's request, I opened the window and looked across the fields, to see if the wanderers were returning. There was no appearance of any more rain, and as I could see no one coming, I started out, determined to find, if possible, some clue to the child's hiding-place. I looked carefully about the field, but without success. Then I wandered slowly up the road. I had not proceeded far, when I beheld in the distance a group of men, whom I quickly recognised as your uncle and his friends. I could not see Nellie, but they were then too far away for me to distinguish them properly. I ran quickly forward; and as I approached them, I found to my inexpressible horror that Nellie was not with them.

'"Have you not found her?" I exclaimed.

'"No, Fanny, we have not so much as heard of her; no one has seen a child, anything like her," replied my husband sorrowfully. "She must, I fear, have fallen into the pond."

'"Oh! Edward," I cried in alarm, "do you think so?"

'"I do," he replied. "Where else can she be?"

'Nothing had terrified me so much as this. The thought of her being drowned seemed awful. Of

death I had never thought till now. We had thought her lost, but not dead.

"We neared the house, "Edward," I said, "how can we tell her mother? the news will surely be her death."

"I don't know," he replied, "but may God give her strength to bear it."

"He went straightway to her room. I did not follow, but waited listening to my husband's words of consolation. I heard her ask—"then there is *no* hope?"

"I—I fear not," replied he.

"As the words fell upon her ear, a dreadful unearthly scream ran through the house. I hurried to the room. The poor widowed mother had swooned, and was lying apparently lifeless on the floor. We carried her to a bed, and applied every possible restorative until the arrival of a surgeon; but we almost feared that death would claim the poor creature before he could arrive. But she lived. For three months she was confined to the house, and when she recovered she was a different person. She was very quiet and sad, and a settled gloom appeared to have taken the place of her once cheerful and benevolent smile. She rarely spoke. Nothing could divert her mind from poor Nellie. All this time we had never heard anything of the lost child. And now the last ray of hope seemed extinguished. Business of great importance

compelled your uncle to return to our home, but I remained with your aunt for more than two years. At last, as it was a great inconvenience to me to be away from home, we tried to persuade her to leave, but we could not; and as I did not like to go away and leave her alone, your uncle's sister came and took the management of his house, and I staid with your aunt.

'Twelve years passed by, and still sad thoughts of Nellie lingered in our hearts. Now, from time to time, I went home, and then came back to your aunt's, for it was impossible to be absent always. As the month approached in which Nellie was lost, I always visited my poor sorrow-stricken sister. She was always more melancholy and nervous at that time; therefore I contrived to be with her. The night upon which, fourteen years ago, the poor child was missed, came. I sat with your aunt by the fire, and tears were in both of our eyes.

'"See," she said "what a storm is rising over the farm. Don't you remember what an awful night it was twelve years ago?"

'"Fourteen years you mean, Annie," I said.

'"Is it fourteen years since my darling was lost?" she asked.

'"Yes, dear" I replied.

'"I wonder if she lives," she continued. "She must be quite a woman now if she does."

'"Yes," I replied, "we should not know her."

'"I should, I am sure; do you think I can forget her beautiful flaxen hair? would that I might see her, I would soon make her remember her mother." And then she buried her face in her hands and wept bitterly.

'The storm we had seen approaching now burst forth with all its fury. Hailstones rattled against the window panes, and the lightning flashed vividly in our eyes.

'"Come, Annie," I said, "It is past eleven o'clock, we will retire."

'"Not yet. We sat up fourteen years ago, we will sit up to-night;" she replied, rising from her seat and going towards the window. As she did so, a dreadful flash streamed across the room, and she clasped my arm in terror.

'"Do not fear."

'"I don't; but where is Nellie?" she replied.

'I knew not what answer to make, and in my confusion I said, "perhaps safe from all this danger."

'"What do you mean?" she asked.

'"Perhaps she is dead!" I ventured to reply.

'"I feel sure she is alive," she continued slowly. "I dreamt last night that she was stolen."

'"Did you?"

'"Yes! do you think it probable?"

'"Not very, but it may be."

'We sat talking a long while about poor Nellie, and at last the storm began to abate.

'"Did you hear a noise?" she asked.

'"No Annie, I heard nothing. What was it like?"

'"Like footsteps approaching," she replied. "Listen, I hear them now."

'I listened, and then I heard some one coming towards the door. "Now, I hear somebody," I said.

'As I finished speaking, there came a knock at the door. Fear took possession of my breast, and I sat breathless. Then another and a louder knock came. "Shall I go?" I asked, "for the servants have gone to bed."

'"Well, I don't know," replied Annie. "Yes, do," she added.

'Trembling I arose, and began to unlock the door. "Let no one come inside," said your aunt, as I opened the door cautiously.

'"Oh! kind lady," said a female voice, "pray give me shelter."

'With the instinct of the moment, I allowed her to enter. From what I could discern, she appeared young, but her form was literally draped in wet rags, and her face was hidden entirely.

'"Where do you come from?" I asked.

'"I have walked many miles to-day," she replied. "See, my feet are bleeding;" and she raised a torn, emaciated, and bleeding foot.

'"Shall I let her come inside?" I asked, turning to your aunt.

'"By no means, Fanny," she replied angrily "How do you know who she is?"

'"Let her enter!" I continued, pleading for the poor girl.

'"I will not," she replied; perhaps she is some hardened tramp. Turn her away instantly!"

'"Oh! for pity's sake, my dear lady, do give me shelter. I am no tramp, but a poor miserable girl." And she came nearer towards the widow, beseeching her to let her remain.

'"I will not! and unless you leave the house instantly," replied your aunt angrily, "I will send for a constable."

'I was afraid to allow the poor wanderer to remain, for I saw your aunt was very angry with me, so I went up to the miserable young creature and gently took her by the arm, intending to lead her away; but she, seeing my intentions, turned from the door. When she was about to leave, she said in a low voice, "Oh! may you never have cause to repent your unkindness to me ma'am. Pray God keep you from want."

'I followed her to the gate; and, bidding her not to notice my sister's harsh manner, gave her some money. She made no reply, but in a most touching manner pressed my hand to her lips, and walked

away. I felt very much grieved at your aunt's conduct, but she had always been very cold and harsh to strangers; more especially since Nellie's mysterious disappearance. Therefore I said nothing to her when I came in about the vagrant. I could see that she was not at rest, for she kept wishing that the storm would abate, and that morning would come. The poor girl's last words preyed upon my mind very much; they seemed to have a deep, impressive meaning. Not only was I troubled with them, but they also affected your aunt, for she kept repeating them to herself in a low voice. At last morning came, and we arose. It was a beautiful morning, the sun shining gloriously, and a cool, refreshing breeze coming in at the open casement. After breakfast, I went out in the garden to tie up some plants that had been washed down by the heavy rain. While there, some one came up to the gate. I looked up and saw a strange woman, apparently a beggar.

'"Well, my good woman," I said, "what do you want?"

'"I beg your pardon, ma'am," she replied, "but there's a young girl wants to see you if you'll come."

'"Where?" I asked.

'"She's at the first house up the lane yonder. May be you'll come soon, for she's very ill," said the woman, turning away.

'"I will come directly," I said.

'Your aunt having heard the conversation, was at first greatly adverse to my going. However, I went in opposition to her wishes. When I entered the room where the young girl lay, I was astonished at the beauty of her face. Beautiful auburn ringlets, in masses, lay on the pillow of the bed; her eyes were of a light blue, and her teeth were as white as ivory. I could scarcely imagine her to be the same girl that came to our house; but then I remembered that I had not seen her face, as she had a shawl closely wrapped around her head.

'"Oh! ma'am," said the invalid raising her head from the pillow, "how kind you are to come so soon. I sent for you because I felt so ill, and you were so good last night."

'I said a few words to comfort her. She spoke to me of her past life, which had been a sad one; then I read to her, and at last she fell asleep. I gently left the room. At the bottom of the stairs, I was met by the woman who had requested my presence.

'"May I speak with you?" she asked, in an agitated voice.

'"Certainly, if you wish it," I replied.

'She then drew me aside, and began to talk in a singular manner of the young girl whom she called "Ellen." I could not understand a single word, and I asked her to speak more slowly.

'"Do you know her?" she asked, wildly.

'"No!" I replied.

'"Not know your own niece?" she exclaimed.

'"What mean you, good woman?" I just found breath enough to ask.

'"Mean! why, that she is your own sister's child, Nellie Barton! Hush! My sister stole her when she was a babe."

'I was amazed! I stood immovable! "Can it be true?" I said.

'"As true as there's a Father in heaven!" she frantically exclaimed; "she told me all her story long before she died, and I brought the girl here to see if you would know her."

'"Come with me to my sister," I said; "tell her all about it."

'"No, no, I will not; if you want the girl, take her; if you don't, leave her with me; she shall never want bread as long as I live, but I will not see her mother."

'"Then will you stay here while I go and consult my sister?" I said.

'"Yes! if you will promise me not to let her come?" she replied. "But don't be long; I have to go far to-day."

'"I will not!" I continued, as I hurried from the house.

'But how to break the news to your aunt? I feared

the shock would be too much for her feeble strength; and I was also afraid of her conduct towards the woman: for I knew she would show little mercy towards those who had injured her. However, I managed to tell her, in as cool a manner as possible, that Nellie was living. And then, when she had recovered from her surprise, I told her that the poor creature who the night before had pleaded so imploringly for a night's rest was her own child!

"'Oh! cruel fate!' she exclaimed, bursting into tears, 'I turned my own child from my door! Can she ever forgive me? I thought I should remember her! What shall I do? What shall I do? I cannot, dare not, see her!'

"'Stay,' I said, 'remember, we all have our faults, and she will forgive you. I will bring her to you.'

"'Yes, do—do, if you think she will not hate me. A mother to treat her own child thus—oh, it is shocking, awful,' she sobbed out.

"'Be composed, my dear,' I said gently, placing her in a chair; 'Nellie is very ill, and if you excite her it may prove serious.'

"'Ah! she was ill too, and I to thrust her away! what is the matter with her, nothing serious?'

"'Nothing, I trust, beyond fatigue and want of nourishment,' I replied. 'They have been tramping about a long while, and have had scarcely anything to eat.'

'"Are there others?" eagerly inquired my sister.

'"Only one poor woman," I replied.

'"Was it she who stole my child?"

'"No; the woman who decoyed her away is dead, and this one is her sister."

'"I must have her here," she said.

'"She will not come; and why should we wish to worry her about the child? It is your own daughter, I am sure."

'"Then bring her at once," she said; "and give the woman this," she continued, drawing her purse from her pocket; "she ought to have some recompense."

'I was surprised to find my sister so kindly disposed towards the strange woman, and at once left, to prevent any change in her manner. I found the woman anxiously awaiting my return; I gave her the purse, and bade her leave directly, for fear of any altercation arising in the village. Then, with the assistance of some cottagers, I had your poor sick cousin carried to our house.

'It is impossible to describe the painful scene that ensued. Joyous as its nature was, I never wish to behold such another. For hours your aunt knelt at her daughter's bedside, imploring her forgiveness, and calling heaven to witness the thorough penitence of her heart. Poor Nellie appeared to have a vivid remembrance of her mother, ill and altered as she was with fourteen years of sorrow: she lay with her

arms clasped about her neck, and declared that her filial love had never altered or faltered through all her misery and pain.

'This sad but deeply touching scene would have continued, had not the surgeon deemed it necessary that the poor girl should be kept quite quiet. Then, and only then, was your aunt induced to leave her. But when she was alone, she was still violently excited, walking rapidly about and crying bitterly. For several weeks Nellie remained in an almost unconscious, but happily not dangerous, state; and your aunt, through anxiety, brought on a serious illness, and was confined to her bed. It was a sad time for me. I feared that I should lose them both; but, thank God, they were spared. After a few weeks Nellie grew better, and was able to get about and ramble in the garden from whence she had been stolen.

'Mother and daughter were never again separated, till the Great Master called the one away and left the other. The grace and charm of Nellie restored cheerfulness and hope to her mother's heart, and brought smiles once more to her wan and sad features.

'The relation of Nellie's adventures among the gipsies was a source of never-failing interest to her mother and me. We undertook the charge of her education, and she rapidly improved, because she

was herself really in earnest. The widow lived to see her daughter happily and suitably married; and then, as though all her wishes on earth were accomplished, quietly faded away. One beautiful autumn evening, the mother sat with her daughter and her new-made son, and was more than usually kind and affectionate towards them. There was, however, a tone of sadness in her voice, and an impressiveness in her manner, which affected them deeply. At length, complaining of fatigue, she arose, embraced them tenderly, and, giving them her blessing, retired for the night. In the morning she was found lifeless in her bed, with a smile of heavenly sweetness on her lips.